

A N
HISTORICAL ACCOUNT
OF THE
LIFE, *and* REIGN
O F
D A V I D,
KING of ISRAEL:

Interpersed with various
CONJECTURES, DIGRESSIONS,
and DISQUISITIONS.

In which (among other things)
Mr. BAYLE's Criticisms, upon the *Conduct*, and
Character of that PRINCE, are fully considered.

IN THREE BOOKS.

The THIRD EDITION, with some very material Additions,
and Amendments.

By the Author of *Revelation Examin'd with Candour*.

*And he shall be like a tree, planted by the rivers of water,
that bringeth forth his fruit in his season. His leaf also
shall not wither.*

PSAL. I.

D U B L I N:

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T H E
P R E F A C E.

THE praises bestowed upon DAVID, by sacred writers, and the calumnies heaped upon him, by some others, of a different denomination, strongly, and, I think, naturally engaged my curiosity, to search into his history, in order to satisfy myself, in his real character. And as this search engaged me, in an exact, and particular enquiry, into all parts of his life, and conduct, I found them filled, with a surprizing series of rare incidents, and interesting events; and such, as either supplied, or suggested a great variety of curious observations, and reflections, Which, I believed, would neither be unpleasing, nor unprofitable; and, for that reason, I soon determined to communicate them to the world. And I own,

not without some hope of supplying even the light, and libertine reader, with matter of information, and entertainment, if not of real improvement; and, at the same time, avoiding all imputation of offence, and demerit, with the serious, the learned, the reasonable, and the religious.

IN this work, I freely own, I served myself, as well as I could, of all the labours of the learned (that came in my way) upon the subject; but without a servile adherence to their judgments, or sentiments, and without tying myself down, to the painful drudgery of retailing their particular opinions, and observations. My business, I thought, was, to feast my reader, the best I could: if the entertainment was to his liking, (salutary, and not distasteful) I imagined, he would be little solicitous, about the purveyors (their names, and characters) of the particular messes, that made it up.

THERE is, perhaps, more vanity than humility, in owning, that I am indebted, on this occasion, to all the commentators of note, more than, I imagined, I should, at my first setting out; and more to a commentator of little note, than to almost all the rest put together; I mean Mr. *Trap*, of *Weston* in *Gloucestershire*. In short, there is but one work upon the subject (which yet treats it more professedly, than any other, which hath fallen in my way) to
which

The P R E F A C E. v

which I am not indebted for so much as one single hint, or one idea.

Now, in truth, the history I am going to present to the reader, is not so properly the history of *David*, as the history of the Divine Providence, during the life, and reign of that prince, and within that scene of action. And this, methinks, is matter of refined, and uncommon curiosity. Here the reader will see the prudence, and passions of men, operating in their ordinary course, and producing their common effects; and, at the same time, the wisdom of God, interposing, superintending, swaying, and conducting them all, to the purposes of his adorable Providence.

HERE he will see, not only the ordinary occurrences, revolutions, and events, which pass *before a common eye*, upon this stage of the world; but he will also behold the secret, and unseen springs, and movements, the whole machinery, by which they are brought about: And from a careful observation, and right application of what he here learns, he will be able to contemplate the whole history of the world, the lives of princes, and the revolutions of empires, in a very different light from that, in which they present themselves, to careless observers.

AND, what is yet of more importance, he will learn what degree of favour, support, and

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success he himself is to hope for, from the Divine Providence, in the upright, and conscientious discharge of his duty ; and what chastisement, distress, and disappointment he is to expect, from a contrary conduct.

IF it please GOD, that such reflections make him wiser, and better, his end will be answered, and so will mine.

LET me add this short request to the reader, that if he meet any incongruity, or absurdity, in the text, not consistent with common sense, he will be so good, as to ascribe it, to some overlooked error of the press, it being scarce possible to avoid all such.

T H E



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A N

HISTORICAL ACCOUNT

OF THE

LIFE and REIGN

OF

King *D A V I D*.

C H A P. I.

*An Account of Saul's Rejection, and David's Designation
to the Throne.*

WHEN the decree of divine rejection and deposition was passed upon *Saul*, for his deliberate and obstinate disobedience in relation to *Amalek*, *David* was, by a very express and particular designation of Almighty God, (such a designation as plainly shews its divine original) appointed to succeed him.

It will not be amiss to explain this matter a little more fully.

The *Amalekites* were a people long since devoted to destruction by Almighty God, for one of the most notorious instances of cruelty, inhumanity, and impiety that ever was heard of; *viz.* the invading and destroying, as far as in them lay, by treachery and surprise, an innocent people, uninjured and unprovoked.

VOL. I.

B

Whoever

Whoever is any way conversant in the Bible, will soon perceive, that by this people, I mean the *Israelites*, when they were going out of *Egypt*, and were manifestly under the immediate and miraculous protection of Almighty God.

This was a sin, at once so inhuman and so atheistical, as perhaps cannot be paralleled in any one instance from the foundation of the world: and therefore it is no wonder, if this flagrant act of villany and impiety (plainly indicating the last degree of previous depravity) produced that dreadful decree against them, recorded in *Deut. xvii. 14.* *I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under Heaven* *. And soon after, the reason and manner

* Mr. Chubb tells us, in his Pamphlet relating to Doctor Rundle's Election, &c. that this is not true in fact; seeing they remained long after, even till *Saul's* time, a distinct people.

Let us try the weight of this objection.—The *Amalekites* remained a distinct people till *Saul's* time; therefore God's decree of extirpation was not executed upon them. This is just such reasoning as if he had said, that *Adam* lived above 900 Years after the sentence of death denounced against him; and therefore he never died. I allow, that a remnant of the *Amalekites* out-lived both *Saul* and *David*, and reached even to the reign of *Hezekiah*, 1 *Chron. iv. 41.* But at the same time, we learn from the last verses of that chapter, that the sons of *Simeon* smote the rest of them that escaped, (i. e. that escaped all the preceding attempts against them) and dwelt there unto this day.

But if we are to rest upon Mr. Chubb's peremptory assertion, they not only were not extirpated, but they continued unmolested, 'till the days of *Saul*. But this surely is a rash and ungrounded Assertion; for they joined the *Moabites* and *Midianites* against *Israel*, *Numb. xxiv. 20.* about 40 Years after their first attempt. And, I think, there is no doubt, but they were defeated with the *Midianites*, *Numb. xxxi.* There is also, I think, good reason to believe, that these inveterate enemies of *Israel* were included in the general Confederacy against *Joshua*, and shared in their common defeat, *Josh. xi.* This is certain, that more than 40 Years after this, they again joined the *Moabites* against *Israel*, *Judg. iii.* And when the *Moabites* were defeated by *Ehud*, can it be made a doubt, whether they shared in that defeat? Or if there could, *Deborah* and *Barak's Song* puts the point out of all doubt, *ver. 14.*

It

manner of effecting this, are added in a subsequent declaration: the strict sense of which, in its most literal translation, stands thus; — *because the band against the throne of God, the War of God against Amalek from generation to generation; i. e. because Amalek hath lifted up his hand against the throne of God, hath set himself to defeat the divine determinations in favour of Israel; therefore God will have war with them from generation to generation, until they are utterly extirpated.*

To reconcile this severe decree to the principles of justice, and to God's own declarations, *Ezek. xviii.* of his limiting the vengeance of guilt to the person of the offender, we need only reflect upon one plain observation, which every day's experience sufficiently furnishes us with; that nothing is more common, than for children to appear unrepentant, and, it may

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be,

It is also certain, that about 150 Years after this, they again joined the *Midianites* against *Israel*, *Judg. vi. & vii.* and were involved in their common destruction: and, forasmuch as the Psalmist mentions them as the confederates of *Gebal* and *Ammon* against *Israel*, it is not improbable, that they shared in the defeat of *Ammon* by *Jephthah*, about 88 Years after this. And from this period to the command given to *Saul* to extirpate them, passed about 80 Years.

The learned authors of the *Universal History* observe, (p. 631. note P.) that this was only a particular application of the general commands before given, (and which the *Jews* had bound themselves and their posterity by a solemn Oath to observe) to destroy all those nations that would not accept of proffered peace, and forsake their idolatry: and to eliminate all that belonged to them. And the exhortation of *Moses* to them, as far as it is applicable to this head, they thus paraphrase: "Remember therefore, that there is no Redemption for them; and that if you suffer yourselves, either thro' pity, or covetousness, to spare any of them, you will not only incur the punishment of perjury and rebellion, but be ensnared into greater guilt, by conforming to their ways. Had *Saul* been mindful of this, he had not saved the king of *Amalek*, and the choicest of the cattle and plunder (1 *Sam. xv. 9, &c.*) When therefore he made that weak and puerile excuse, that he designed the latter as an offering to God, *Samuel* did justly reprove him, by shewing him how vain it was to pretend to atone for one open violation of God's command by another."

be, improved and inveterate in the sins of their ancestors : and that nothing is more easy to the divine prescience, than to foresee this, and to pronounce upon it. And that this was the case of the *Amalekites*, sufficiently appears from their history. For as their fathers attempted upon the *Israelites*, when under the manifest protection of God ; their sons continued to do the same, upon every occasion, though the same protection became every day more and more conspicuous, by many and repeated instances.

How this decree had hitherto been put in execution by the people of God, and under his immediate direction; from age to age, will best be learned from the books of *Numbers*, *Joshua*, and *Judges*. And now *Saul*, as next in order, was appointed, was in a very solemn, express, and particular manner, commanded to execute his part. And to shew that the sins of those very *Amalekites*, now commanded to be destroyed, were the real Motives of their destruction ; they are, in that command given for it, expressly and emphatically called the *sinners* the *Amalekites* ; and their king is charged by the prophet with the guilt of Murders ; (and the *Kenites*, as less criminal, are commanded to be separated from them).

But we are asked, why their innocent children should be put to death ? To this it is very obvious to answer by another very plain question ; Why do innocent children die every day ? It was a mercy to the children of the *Amalekites* to be taken off in their innocence, before they were tainted with the infection of their fathers guilt *.

And

* We are told, that *Schach Abbaz* extirpated the inhabitants of several villages in *Persia*, for their abominable wickedness (*Ambass. Travels*, l. 7. p. 294.) Nor have historians, as far as I can learn, charged this act upon him as cruel or tyrannous.—
There is such a thing as the vulgar call *an ill breed* ; and sin runs in the blood. It is certainly a blessing to the world to have such a race

And to put it out of all doubt, even with *Saul* himself, that the punishment and prevention of guilt, were the only end and aim of that command, he was expressly enjoined to destroy, not only the *Amalekites*, but all that they had, *ox and sheep, camel and ass*; that the memory of so vile a race might be blotted out from under heaven. A command admirably fitted to spread and to establish the terror of divine vengeance upon guilt over the earth, and, in consequence of that, to restrain the enormities of mankind. Whereas, had the *Amalekites* been commanded to be destroyed, and their substance spared, avarice and interest might have justly been suspected as the real motives of this extirpation; and the divine command as a pretence only.

Besides all this; tho' *Saul* might not have entered rightly into the reason of the command, nor been influenced either by duty or gratitude to a religious observance of it, yet one would think, the example of *Achan*, so fresh in the history of his own nation, (*Josh. vii.*) who was destroyed, with his whole Family, for a like instance of disobedience, might sufficiently have deterred him from slighting it.

Whereas then *Saul* did not only disobey this command, but acted in manifest opposition to the reason and end of it; sparing the murderous *Agag*, (in all probability, from the prospect of a rich ransom) and all the spoil that was worth saving, and destroying only the refuse; yet was he so hardened in his stubborn disobedience, as obstinately to affirm to *Samuel's* face, that he had executed the divine command. And when that was confuted by the evidence of fact, he then had the hardiness to shift the blame from

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himself,

race rooted out. The infection of incorrigible guilt should be arrested at any rate; and if nothing but extremities can effect this, extremities are then sufficiently justified in the great governor of the world. Nay, they are manifestly required and exacted from him, in that character. Men are tied down to other measures of acting.

himself, and to shield his avarice under the shew of popular piety :—*The people* (said he to *Samuel*) *took of the spoil, the chief of the things, which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the Lord thy God in Gilgal.*

To this, *Samuel* made that noble reply, (1 Sam. xv. 22.) *And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice; and to hearken, than the fat of rams.*

When this last heinous act of disobedience was added to *Saul's* other sins, God, by the mouth of his prophet, pronounced the decree of his deposal from the sovereignty; nor could *Samuel's* long and earnest intercession ever prevail to reverse it*.

This was the state of things, when *Samuel* was expressly commanded by God, to fill his horn with oil, to go to *Bethlehem*, and there to anoint one of the sons of *Jesse* the *Bethlehemite* (whom God should then name to him) to succeed *Saul* in the kingdom.

The prophet would gladly have excused himself from executing this dangerous commission, from the apprehension of *Saul's* hearing it, and revenging his deposition upon him. To remove his fears upon this head, God commands him to take an heifer, and to give out, that he was come thither to sacrifice to the Lord; which, as a prophet, he had a right to do where-ever he thought fit.

He went accordingly; and was no sooner arrived at *Bethlehem*, but the people crouded about him, in dreadful apprehensions of his being sent to denounce some divine threat or vengeance for their sins†. But *Samuel* soon quieted their fears upon that head, and only

* It was possibly an additional aggravation of *Saul's* sin, that tho' he had so ill executed the divine command in relation to *Amalek*, yet he erected a trophy, (the vulgar hath it, a triumphal arch) as a monument of his victory over them. Possibly the first monument of the kind that ever was erected.

† Or perhaps, in apprehension of his having fled thither from *Saul's* wrath, and that they might suffer by sheltering him.

only let them know; that he was come to sacrifice to the LORD; and enjoined them to sanctify themselves for their attendance upon the altar. (It seems some sanctification was then deemed necessary, to qualify persons for their fit attendance on the most solemn ordinance of religion*): And when the sacrifice was over, he called *Jesse* and his sons to the feast, which always followed the sacrifice.

Upon the appearance of *Eliab* the first-born of *Jesse*, the prophet, struck with the gracefulness and dignity of his person, hastily concluded him the man appointed to the sovereignty by Almighty God. But this his human Judgment (which probably was grounded upon the remembrance of a like graceful mien and presence in *Saul*) was quickly re-proved; and he was given to understand, that God judged not, as man too often doth, by appearances and seeming perfections, but by the secret and unseen powers and dispositions of the heart.

Immediately six other sons of *Jesse* were ordered to pass in review before the prophet, but none of these had the divine approbation.

The prophet, (as we may well imagine) sufficiently embarrassed at this suspense of the divine designation, asked *Jesse*, if he had no other son? To which he answered, that he had one more, his youngest, in the fields, keeping his flock. Upon which, the prophet immediately ordered him to be sent for; declaring, that they must not sit down until he came. *Jesse* obeyed: and when *David* arrived, (for he was the youngest) God immediately ordered the prophet to arise and anoint him; for this was he.

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Accordingly

* Now, however ritual this sanctification might be, yet, I believe, it is not doubted but that it was intended as an emblem of that purer, and more spiritual sanctification, which should be required of all those, who commemorate the great sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

Accordingly *Samuel* arose and anointed him : but whether *in* the midst of his brethren, *i. e.* in their presence ; or whether *from* the midst of his brethren, *i. e.* apart, and in the presence only of *Jesse*, is not so clear from the text. Tho' the rudeness, with which they afterwards treated him, makes it more probable, that it was apart : unless we suppose that rudeness to have arisen from jealousy, as very possibly it might.

From this account it appears, 1st, That *Samuel* very unwillingly anointed another king in the life of *Saul*. 2dly, That if he had been swayed by his own Judgment, *Eliab* would have been the man. And, 3dly, That if *Jesse's* judgment had prevailed, his seven other sons had been preferred to *David*. From all which it is evident, that the election of *David* to the throne of *Israel*, was an immediate act of providence, without the least intervention of human wisdom or contrivance.

How *David* came to be so little accounted of in the eye of a parent, as not to be thought worthy so much as to be called to the feast with his brethren, is not easy to say ; unless it be, that as elder children take earlier and fuller possession of their parents affections ; so, unless they forfeit them by some course of ill conduct, they seldom fail to retain some preference in them, to the last.

However, that *David* wanted no recommendation of personal advantages, is evident ; for he was beautiful, and (what implies a great deal more) amiable. The text tells us, *he was ruddy, and fair of eyes, and goodly to look to*. But very probably, these advantages gave him little distinction, in a family, where beauty seems to have been familiar and hereditary.

C H A P. II.

A Digression concerning Samuel, the Prophets, and their Schools.

THE unscriptural reader may possibly have some curiosity to know who this extraordinary person might be, who was thus appointed to pull down, and to set up kings; and readers of another character will, I hope, indulge this short digression, on that account.

Samuel was of the tribe of *Levi*, and of a very distinguished family among that tribe, that of the *Kohathites*, descended from *Korah* the *Gainfayer*, whose descendants were eminent for their musical skill in the service of the temple; and are by some commentators (probably for that reason) accounted prophets. His father *Elkanah* is believed by some men of learning to have been a prophet, and the son of a prophet; (and his mother is numbred among the prophetesses) perhaps for no better reason than his having been of the city of *Ramatbaim Zophim**; which is interpreted *Ramah of the Prophets*; tho', in strictness, it is *Ramah of the Watchmen*, prophets being sometimes so stiled in scripture.

His father is believed to have been first married to *Hannab* the mother of *Samuel*, whom he tenderly loved; but finding her barren, he (through that eager desire of issue which swayed the *Jews*) took also another woman to wife, named *Peninnah*; who finding herself sufficiently prolifick, could not forbear upbraiding *Hannab* with her barrenness: and as *Elkanah* went up year by year to *Shiloh*, where the ark then resided, to offer sacrifice, *Peninnah* took the opportunity of the feast which ensued, to vex her with more than ordinary reproaches upon that head, in the face of her family and friends: and this she did one day to such a degree, that *Hannab*, rising from

* Supposed to be the *Arimathea* of the New Testament.

from the feast, in which she could not share, poured out her complaints to God; and prayed, and wept before him in extremity of anguish, beseeching him to bestow a son upon her, and vowing to dedicate him in a very distinguished manner, to his service, during his whole life *.

God heard her petition, and she fulfilled her vow; for, waiting only till the child *Samuel* was weaned, (that is, till he was three years old) and surmounting all the ties of tenderness, and foregoing all her female fears and fondness, she immediately conveyed him to the temple, and dedicated him in a most solemn manner, and with a noble hymn of humiliation and thanksgiving, to the service of God.

Eli the high-priest received him as became his piety; and the little *Samuel* ministered before him from that day forward, and was early and signally distinguished by the divine favour and influence, to the great and full satisfaction of all the people of *Israel*; insomuch that when *Eli* and his wicked sons perished, he succeeded to the supreme civil power over the whole nation, where he sustained the character of a most equitable and righteous ruler, and just judge; which last character he still sustained (even when God, for the sins of the *Israelites*, gave them a king) to his dying day.

The particulars of *Saul's* election to the supreme power, and *Samuel's* divesting himself of it, are to be found at large in the first book of *Samuel*, and are, I think, not unworthy the curious reader's regard.

Samuel now dispossessing himself of the supreme power, was however no way diminished in dignity, or in the desire of doing good; but continued revered alike both by prince and people. Part of his

* The Levites, in their ordinary course, were obliged only to attend the service of the temple in their turns from the age of twenty five to fifty; — after which they became judges, and preachers of righteousness.

his time he gave to the administration of publick justice ; and the rest he dedicated to the more immediate service of God, in a learned and religious retirement in one of the prophetick Schools at *Ramah*, over which he presided. Of these men and their schools, take this short account.

The Jewish nation had no such schools or seminaries for the education of their children; as are now in use among us ; with them, parents were in the place of tutors : and as they had no regard, or, to speak more properly, as they had great contempt for heathen literature, they contented themselves with teaching their children their own language and laws : upon full assurance, that a proper proficiency and skill in these, would gain them all the credit and esteem they desired ; and as their law-giver had taken sufficient care to inculcate this duty, nothing was more justly reputable amongst them, than a conscientious discharge of it. However, forasmuch as parents are not always the best qualified to the discharge of this duty, and a careful study and thorough knowledge of the scriptures, was of such vast importance, at once to inform and enlarge their minds, and to preserve them in the purity of their religion, and keep them a distinct people, it pleased God to institute several orders of men for this purpose ; of which the principal were the priests, levites, and prophets.

The business of the priests was, to minister in holy things, to teach the law in all its parts, to judge and to decide all controversies ; and the levites were their subalterns in all these Offices. But as a great part of their time was taken up in their attendance upon the altar, and other rituals of the *Mosaic* law ; and as it is natural for men to lay a great, perhaps too great a stress upon those things in which they themselves are greatly concerned and interested ; it pleased God to raise up another order of men, to be a check upon the priests, and to be the guardians
of

of the spiritual part of the law of *Moses*, as the priests were of the ceremonial; and this was the order of the prophets: a race of men, trained up, by a long course of study, discipline, strict temperance, and utter contempt of worldly grandeur, to be teachers of righteousness; and fitted, by the best habits of piety and virtue, to receive, upon extraordinary occasions, the inspirations of the spirit of God.

These were to the Jews the great teachers of virtue and wisdom, as the philosophers were in some measure, to the heathens; but with great disadvantage, from their deficiency in the two last characters: whereas these advantages empowered, and inspired the prophets, to preach true righteousness to the people, and to depress the value of all the rituals of religion, compared with it. To preach and to prepare them for the kingdom of the *Messiah*; and to manifest their mission by miracles, and predictions of future events; which enabled them, on many occasions, to reprove and to repress alike, the enormities of princes, priests, and people. Nay, sometimes, to awe even neighbouring nations into repentance and amendment.

Now tho' God, to shew that the operations of his spirit are not tied to human institutions, sometimes chose uneducated men, and even women, to receive and to publish his inspirations; yet at the same time, to manifest the value of wise discipline, and good institutions, and to shew their fitness to prepare men for the influence of the spirit of God, he generally chose his prophets out of such as were educated in the schools of the prophets; of which take this short account, from a work of great learning, and (I think) equal candour*.

“ On the other hand, they were no less careful to
 “ cultivate the knowledge of them (*the scriptures*)
 “ among themselves. We cannot, indeed, be sure
 “ that

* Universal History, p. 730, 731.

“ that they had any synagogues before the captivity ;
 “ tho’ it be far from improbable, considering the
 “ great distance at which some of them lived from
 “ the temple ; and that, at the best, they were
 “ obliged to resort thither but thrice in a year : but
 “ other places they had for prayer and instruction,
 “ namely, the schools of the prophets ; to which
 “ they might repair on the sabbaths, new-moons,
 “ and other festivals. By prophets, we mean not
 “ those strictly so called, men endowed with the spi-
 “ rit of prophecy ; but their disciples, or, as the
 “ Hebrew idiom words it, the *sons* of the prophets.
 “ The former were generally consulted by the kings,
 “ priests, and elders of the people, upon all extra-
 “ ordinary occasions, whether about religion or state
 “ affairs ; and the latter were brought up under
 “ them, and fitted for instructing the people in the
 “ way of virtue, and the worship of God.

“ These had their habitations chiefly in the
 “ country ; they lived in a kind of society among
 “ themselves, and had generally one or more of the
 “ prophets to be heads over them, and to whom
 “ they gave the title of father ; their houses were
 “ but mean, and of their own building ; their food
 “ was chiefly pottage made of herbs, unless when
 “ the people sent some better fare to them, such as
 “ bread, parched corn, honey, dried fruits, and the
 “ like ; their dress was plain and coarse, and tied
 “ about with a leathern girdle : their wants being
 “ so few, were easily supplied by their own hands ;
 “ and as their views reached no further, so they
 “ limited their labour to that, that they might be-
 “ stow the more time in prayer, study, and retire-
 “ ment. Riches were no temptation to them in
 “ such a state ; and therefore *Elijah* not only refused
 “ *Naaman’s* presents, but punished *Gebasi* in a severe
 “ manner, for having clandestinely obtained a small
 “ portion of them. This laborious, recluse, and
 “ abstemious course of life, joined to the meanness
 “ of

“ of dress, gave them such a strange air, especially
 “ among the courtiers, that they looked upon them
 “ as no better than mad-men. Their extraordinary
 “ freedom in reproving even princes for their wicked
 “ deeds, did likewise expose them frequently to per-
 “ secutions, imprisonments, and sometimes to death,
 “ especially in the reigns of some wicked princes,
 “ such as were *Ahab* and *Manasseh*. But, in the main,
 “ they were always respected by the better and wiser
 “ sort, even of the highest rank, and used with the
 “ utmost reverence and regard, both in language
 “ and behaviour.”

Many learned men have thought, that in these schools they studied arithmetick and astronomy ; and Doctor *Patrick* thinks, that the Greek word *Sophos*, which was originally the title of astronomers, might be derived from *Zoph*, which in *Hebrew* signifies a prophet. Nor is this an irrational conjecture ; especially when we consider, that the prophets generally fixed their residence upon the tops of hills, where, if they studied not astronomy, yet were they always at hand to preach a better knowledge of heaven to the people that delighted to sacrifice on high places.

One thing we certainly know, that in these schools they studied and practised music in great perfection ; and as the praises of God made a considerable part of their business, it is not to be imagined that their musick was without song.

To conclude : “ Here (says the learned Dr. *Trap*)
 “ was professed the true philosophy ; which, ac-
 “ cording to *Aristotle*, is a divine and heavenly
 “ Doctrine indeed * ; far different from that vain
 “ and deceitful philosophy which the apostle in-
 “ veigheth against (*Col. ii. 8*), and which is in truth
 “ nothing but sophistry ; which *Aristotle* calls a
 “ seeming, but not a substantial wisdom †.”

Of

* Οἶον καὶ δαυδινὸν οὗτος χρῆμα.

† Φανερὴν σοφία ἔσται, δὲ μή.

Of this order of men was *Samuel*, an eminent prophet, and patriot! a prophet, and the son and father of prophets; the child of piety and prayers, and the man of God.

C H A P. III.

What ensued upon David's being anointed to the Succession of the Throne, together with the Occasion of his being called to Saul's Court.

DAVID elected and anointed to the throne *, in the manner already mentioned, became from that day eminent for fortitude, prudence, and piety, beyond any man of his own, or perhaps of any succeeding age. It is true, they that credit the scripture history in this affair, will easily account for all these extraordinary accomplishments and improvements; for that assures us, that *the spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward* †. And I should be glad to learn from those who do not credit this history, how otherwise they can account for those extraordinary effects and endowments, which immediately ensued *David's* designation to the throne.

I should be glad to learn from these gentlemen, how a designation to empire, which, in its ordinary course, is too apt to corrupt, debase, and over-set with

* It is hardly to be supposed (say the authors of *Universal History*, p. 763, note E) that *Samuel* did then explain the whole mystery of his anointing of *David*; which might have had some fatal consequence, had it come to *Saul's* ears: but as it was usual to anoint men to the office of prophet, as well as to the regal dignity, it is more likely that he left them to suppose the former.

† Tho' his outward circumstances were not changed in the mean time, for he continued keeping his father's flock; yet the anointing was not an empty ceremony: a divine power went along with the instituted sign, and he found himself inwardly advanced in wisdom, courage, concern for the publick, and all qualifications proper for a prince; to satisfy him, that his election was of God. *Millar's Hist. of the Church*, &c. p. 146.

with vanity, should raise an obscure youth, uneducated, and little accounted of even in the esteem of a parent's partiality, in an obscure age and country, without the advantage either of instruction or example, into the greatest musician, the noblest poet, and the most consummate hero of all antiquity. For that *David* was all these, and more than these, will, I hope, be one day out of all doubt with the candid reader.

In the mean time, until they explain, it is not, I think, unreasonable to hope that the candid reader will believe.

When *Samuel's* important business at *Bethlehem* was over, he returned again to his usual residence at *Ramah*, and *David* to his flock; where his great abilities and endowments quickly became so conspicuous, that they recommended him in a very distinguished manner to the service of *Saul*, whose mind now became disturbed by all the black and malignant passions, without any reason, that we know of, but that which the text tells us, that *the spirit of the Lord was now departed from him, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him* *.

Whether any more be meant by this, than that God, for *Saul's* hardened impenitence, withdrew his restraining and guiding grace, and left him a prey to his own passions, I cannot take upon me to say. This only I am sure of, that no man living needs a heavier chastisement from Almighty God, than the letting his own passions loose upon him: The consequence to the mind, I apprehend, would, in that case, be much the same, as it would be to the body, if the restraining pressure of the air were removed, and all the muscles, vessels, and humours, left to the full freedom of their own powers and tendencies.

On

* *Josephus* relates, that he sometimes became like a demoniac; he having forsaken God and his duty, (says Mr. Millar, *ibid.*) the Lord, in his righteous judgment, withdrew from him those assistances of the good Spirit which formerly fitted him for the government.

On the other hand, I cannot see upon what principles of reason, religion, or philosophy, we should take upon us, absolutely to preclude the agency of evil spirits in this case ; or why God should be any more restrained in the use of their powers, on this or the like occasions, than in those of bears, lions, scorpions, or noxious animals of any kind, some of which, we know, he hath employed, for chastising or restraining the enormities of his creatures. And besides, there is this presumption in favour of this latter opinion, that *Saul's* physicians, who knew their own business best, and could best judge, whether the disorder of his mind lay within their province, or without it, expressly ascribe it to the agency now mentioned (1 Sam. xvi. 15.): *Behold now an evil spirit from God troubleth thee.* They then proceed to prescribe in the following manner: *Let our Lord now command the servants which are before thee, to seek out a man, who is a cunning player on the harp ; and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his band, and thou shalt be well.*

Commentators, who ascribe this disorder to natural causes, abound with learned reasonings and quotations, to prove the power of musick in cases of this kind ; and particularly urge that proof from *Seneca*, (*de Ira*, l. iii. c. 9.) that *Pythagoras* quieted the perturbations of the mind with a harp *. And, possibly, so he might: but, as we are not told, whence those perturbations proceeded, his having done so, no way affects the question before us. All that we know is, that we have reason to believe, from the example of *Elisba*, 2 Kings iii. (nor will the best philosophy forbid us) that quieting the per-

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C

turbations

* *Pythagoras perturbationes animi lyra componebat.*

Ibuanus tells us (tom. 3. *Buckley's* edit. l. 57. sect. 19.) that after the *Parisian* massacre, *Charles* the Ninth was wont to have his sleep disturbed by nightly horrors, and was composed to rest by a symphony of singing-boys.

turbations of the mind, is absolutely necessary, towards receiving the sacred influence of the spirit of God. And if so, then may we fairly conclude, that the same state of mind, which fits us for the influence of good spirits, as naturally unfits us for the influence of such, as are evil: and therefore, the same power of musick, which quieted *Elisba's* rage and indignation against the idolatrous *Jeboram* *, and fitted him for the agency of the Holy Spirit of God, might, for the same reason, by quieting *Saul's* unruly passions, unfit him for the agency of the evil spirit, which troubled him, and, of consequence, work his cure for that time. And accordingly we are assured by the sacred historian, that *David* was recommended to *Saul*, on this occasion, by one of his servants, to play before him; that he was sent for accordingly; that his father immediately dispatched him, with a small present of bread and wine, to the king; and that his musick had the desired effect. And, if we suppose *Josephus's* account of this matter to be true, that *David* added songs, and hymns, to the harmony of his harp, (hymns that repressed the suggestions of the evil spirit) what is it, which the united power of such musick, and such poetry, might not effect †? And that he did so, is, I think, more than probable; first, because he excelled both in voice and poetry; and it was natural he should, on this occasion, exert his talents; secondly, because he could not but know, that such united accomplishments would, at once, more endear him to *Saul*, and be more effectual to his amendment; and, thirdly, because this was the known, subsequent practice, and praise of all the celebrated bards of antiquity.

* That the prophet was in a rage against him, appears evidently from his answer; *Get thee to the prophets of thy father, and the prophets of thy mother.*

† *Xenocrates*, we are told, cured madness by the harmony of verse. *Alexander ab Alexandro, Gemal. lib. 2. cap. 17.*

ty. Nor have I the least doubt, but that the distinguished honours, paid in after-ages, to those, who excelled on the harp, added to those high, and known epithets of *divine, inspired by God, and honoured by the people*, were derived from the tradition of *David's* inspiration, and the honours heaped upon him, both by Almighty God, and the whole realm of *Israel*.

This best accounts for *Homer's* * seating the divine *Demodocus* (introduced by an herald) on a silver studded throne, in the most honourable part of the assembly, and at a single and separate table, like an eastern prince; and at another time placing him, in the middle of the assembly, (as the *Israelites* did *Eli*, the high-priest, in the height of his dignity) on a seat against a pillar †; and crowned all with the appellation of the hero *Demodocus* ||; honours utterly

C 2

absurd

* It appears from Sir *Isaac Newton's Chronology*, that *Homer* flourished about one hundred and fifty years after *David*; and that the *Phœnicians*, who fled from *Zidon* and from *David*, under *Cadmus*, *Phœnix*, &c. carried letters, musick, and poetry into *Greece*. These men could not but know the true character of their conqueror; and, letters being then in use, it was easy to derive it to their posterity, tho' their hatred of him might make them conceal, or change his name.

† *Joash* also. when declared king, stood by a pillar, as the manner was, says the text.

|| ————— θεῖον αἰδον

Δήμοδοκον. — λαοῖς, τετιμένον —————

Κήρυξ δ' ἐγγυθεν ἦλθεν ἄγων ἐρίηρον αἰδον

Τῷ δ' ἄρα Ποντόνοο; ἔθηκε θρόνον ἀργυρέηλον

Μέσσω δα. τυμένων, —————

————— παρ' δ' ἐτίθει ————— τράπεζαν

————— πολυμήτης Ὀδυσσεύς

Νώτῃ ἀπὸ προτάμων. —————

Πᾶσι γὰρ ἀνθρώποισιν ἐπιχθονίοισιν αἰδοι

Τιμῆς ἔμμοροι εἰσὶ καὶ αἰδῶς. —————

Ἡρώι Δημοδόκῃ.

Ὅμηρ. Ὀδυσ. 9.

absurd and unaccountable, even in this age of musical idolatry, upon any other than the foregoing supposition.

As the recommendation now made to *Saul of David*, is very remarkable, the reader will not, I hope, be displeased to dwell a little upon it: *Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the Lord is with him.*

Here we see to what a height of reputation, *David's* endowments had raised him, even in his retirement, from the time, that *the spirit of the Lord came upon him*: his fame grew, as *Horace* tells us that of *Marcellus* did, like a tree, long hid in the shade, which was at full growth, as soon as it was seen. And that there was some thing very extraordinary in the endowments of *David*, appears, evidently, from the last clause of this recommendation, *And the Lord is with him*: plainly implying, that he was highly favoured, and eminently protected by Almighty God.

In

*Be there Demodocus, the bard of fame,
Taught by the gods to please.* B. 8, v. 40.

*The herald now arrives, and guides along
The sacred master of celestial song.* v. 55--6.

*Highb on a radiant throne, sublime in state,
Encircled by huge multitudes, he sate:* v. 61--2.
With silver shone the throne,

Before his seat a polish'd table shines. v. 65.
*Then, from the chine, Ulysses carves with art
Delicious Food, an honorary part.* v. 520.

*Lives there a man beneath the spacious skies,
Who sacred honours to the bard denies?* v. 524.
POPE'S Odyss.

In the next place, we may observe the artful address of this recommendation, which paints out *David*, tho' yet a youth, as now in his prime both of valour and prudence. And to account for this, the reader is to know, that valour and strength were the first, and most advantageous recommendations to the favour of *Saul*, who (like some princes of our age) piqued himself, upon bringing men of that character into his service (1 *Sam.* xiv. 5): *And when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him.*

In the next place, *Saul*, we know, was troubled with an evil spirit, under whose influence he was, doubtless, guilty of many and great extravagancies; it was not fit, that a raw, giddy, youth should be witness to these; and therefore, *David* is recommended as a prudent, and a valiant man: as a man of prudence, he was fitter to be trusted with the secret of *Saul's* extravagancies in his fits; and as a valiant man, he was more likely to bear with the infirmities of a brave man, as *Saul* was; and therefore, the occasion required, that not only his character, but his age also, should now be raised, as much as possible. Nor did *David* belye the recommendation made of him; for the sacred historian assures us, that he not only approved, but endeared himself to *Saul*, and was made his armour-bearer.

Thus was *David* called to court, and a commerce with the world, and gradually prepared, and fitted for the great part, he was to act in it, by the pure appointment of the divine Providence, without any forecast, or contrivance either of his own, or of his friends.

How long *David* continued at court, and when, and why he returned to his father, and his flock, is no-where told us. His situation with *Saul* seems not altogether so well fitted, for the views of a great genius. Doubtless, he found himself formed for great things; and, possibly, with all his humility a-

bout him, he was not long satisfied with his condition, and character ; and preferred, in *Cesar's* way of thinking, to be first among the shepherds, than last, or even low, in *Saul's* train. Or, possibly, *Saul's* favour (for he was sufficiently inconstant) might have abated with his distemper ; and therefore, when he found himself tolerably recovered, and his thoughts were wholly taken up with preparations for the *Philistine* war, *Jesse* might easily have redeemed *David's* attendance, by substituting three other sons in the service of *Saul*. From the text it shou'd seem, that *David* was, but a very little time, at court ; no longer than *Saul's* sickness required. For we are told (1 Sam. 16. 23.) *that when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, David took an harp, and played with his hand : so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.* And then, immediately follows the account of the assembling of the *Philistine* forces ; before which, it appears, that *David* had for some time been returned to his father, but when, or why is not said : probably, when *Saul* was well, he was glad to get rid of his Physician, as fast as he could : not caring, to be any more put in mind of his distemper, or his cure. And if so, *David* only remained at court, till the king recovered.

But whatever the occasion of his leaving the court might be, it is evident, it was not without the special apppointment of Providence ; whose purposes required, that when *David* should next make his appearance there, it should be under a more advantageous character, than that of the most excellent musician ; which soon after came to pass.

C H A P. IV.

David's Duel with Goliath.

HOW long *David* had now been returned to his father, and his flock, when the *Philistine* war broke out, can no where be clearly collected ; but

but I think it pretty evident, that he finally returned, upon his father's sending his three eldest sons into the service of *Saul*: for when we are told, that *David* was the youngest son, and the three eldest followed *Saul*; the sacred historian immediately subjoins, *But David went and returned from Saul *, to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem.*

The occasion of this war is unknown: probably, the *Philistines* were tempted to engage in it, by the fame of *Saul's* lunacy, which would leave him ill able to conduct it, to advantage.

As little are we informed of the continuance of this war, though, I think, we may fix the æra of the *Philistine* champion's challenge; in the very beginning of it: we are only told, that when *David* was directed by his father, to go to the camp of *Saul*, with some necessary provisions for his brethren, and a present of ten cheeses for the captain of their thousand, he rose up early in the morning, and left his flock with a keeper, and took, and went as *Jesse* had commanded him, and came to the camp, just as both armies were going to engage: *He came to the trench*, says the text, *as the host was going forth to*

C 4

fight

* The words of the original are very remarkable: *But David going and returning from above Saul.* This is best explained by what *Josephus* tells us (Lib. 6. c. 8 of his *Antiq.*) that the Physicians advised him to get a man, to stand over his head, (viz. as he lay in bed) and play, &c. this also explains *Saul's* message to *Jesse*, when he sent for *David* a second time, (1 Sam. 16. 22.) *Let David, I pray thee, stand before me*: In the letter of the original, *at my face*. In this situation if he saw *David's* face, he would only see it foreshortned: and the harp might wholly hide both his face and person.

From this text of *David's* going and returning from *Saul*, and the account of *Saul's* sending for him a second time, I think it evident, that *David* never went to Court, but when *Saul's* illness called him thither; and that he returned to his flock, as soon as that was over. Which is further confirmed by what we are told, (1 Sam. 18. 2.) that after the death of *Goliath*, *Saul took him* (*David*) *on that day*, and would let him go no more home to his father's house.

fight, and shouted for the battle. This sound soon inflamed his manly spirit, with more than common ardour, to see, and to share in the engagement. He left his carriage in the care of the officer, who guarded the baggage, and ran into the army, and saluted his brethren; and as he talked with them, (both armies being now drawn up in battle array) the *Philistine* champion, *Goliath* of *Gath*, who, it seems, had now braved the *Israelite* army for forty days together, stepped out, as usual, to urge his challenge, which he did with a loud and terrible voice, the tenour of which was, as follows:

That, to spare the effusion of human blood, they should decline a general engagement, and leave the decision of their quarrel to the valour of a single champion, chosen on each side, whose defeat, or victory, should determine that of his country, which was to follow his fate: — *If, says he, your man be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants; but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us:* concluding all, with a bold defiance of the *Israelite* army, and demand of an antagonist.

The challenge was plausible, but however, seemingly, founded upon fortitude, and humanity, was not, in reality, the effect of either. The case was thus: The *Philistines* had one man, amongst them, of a very singular make, and character; his stature was gigantic, and his strength proportionable; he was nine feet nine inches high*, and his very arms, and armour were more than a load for another man. He is, generally, believed to be a *Philistine* nobleman, and, as a mark of dignity, an armour-bearer carried his shield before him; a distinction, which *Alexander* the

* *Pliny* tells us. that a man of that stature was brought from *Arabia* to *Rome*, in the reign of *Claudius*, l. 7. c. 16. where he mentions the remains of other men of much greater dimensions.

the Great *, and other ancient heroes, always affected. It is no wonder then, if the *Philistines* confided more in the strength, and prowess of this man, than in that of their mercenary forces, which were their chief strength ; and therefore, chose rather to rest their cause upon his single arm, than the issue of a general engagement.

Besides all this, they well knew, such a challenge, from such a man, was admirably fitted to strike a general terror into the adverse army, inasmuch as, it could not fail to make an impression of fear upon the breast of every single man in it. If then the *Israelites* accepted the challenge, the *Philistines* were assured of conquest ; if they declined it, it must be from the impression of an universal fear, which would better open their way to victory, in a general engagement.

In this distress *David* found the forces of his country ; *Saul*, and all *Israel* mightily dismayed, not daring so much as to stand the terror of the *Philistine's* presence, but retiring to their trenches, as he approached : and here, as it was natural, their conversation wholly turned upon this champion, and the reward offered, by the king, to any one, that should slay him in combat ; no less than the freedom of his family, added to great riches, and the honour of the king's alliance by marriage with one of his daughters ; asking one another (as the manner of men is, who could think of nothing else) had they seen him ? and telling one another (what every one of them knew) what reward should be given to the man, that subdued him.

David listened to their accounts, and mixed in their enquiries with an eager curiosity, expressing, at the same time, some degree of wonder, that no one had

* *Arrian* tells us (l. 6. 244. Edit. *Gronov.*) that *Alexander* had the shield, taken out of the temple of *Trojan Pallas*, carried before him in all his battles.

had yet accepted the challenge : *What shall be done,* says he, *to the man, that killeth this Philistine, and take away the reproach from Israel ?* And again ; *For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God ?* The workings of *David's* modesty, and valour are finely painted in these questions : his modesty would not suffer him directly, and openly, to accept the challenge, and profess himself *Goliath's* antagonist ; and yet, the fortitude of his own beating breast, and the glory of the undertaking, left him wholly at a loss, why others should decline it. His eldest brother, *Eliab*, observed his ardour, and was offended at it, he, who knew *David's* spirit, soon saw his design ; and filled with indignation, lest *David* should achieve, what he himself had not dared to undertake, he reproved him with the most taunting questions, *Why he left his flock ?* and what he had to do there ? upbraiding him at the same time, that nothing but vanity, and a vicious curiosity, had drawn him thither, tho', without doubt, he was well acquainted with his true errand. To all this, *David* (who found his indignation rising, but would not allow himself to indulge it against his elder brother) made no other reply, than by asking his brother, what he had done to offend him ? and whether the greatness of the occasion did not justify all the questions, he could ask about it ? Then, turning to somebody else, he renewed his enquiries ; and, stung, with double indignation, at the ill treatment of his brother, and the insolence of the *Philistine*, he broke out into such open declarations of accepting the challenge, as were quickly brought before *Saul* ; and being called, and examined in his presence, continued undaunted in his resolution.

Saul endeavoured to dissuade him from so rash, and desperate an attempt, by a remonstrance of his youth, and *Goliath's* confirmed strength, and experienced

enced valour; but to no purpose. *David* defended his design, by a relation of his success against enemies, full as dangerous as *Goliab*.

There is an united dignity, and humility in the relation, which no words, but his own, can come up to; — *Thy servant*, said he, *kept his father's sheep; and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock, and I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion, and the bear, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing, he hath defied the armies of the living God.*

Here, we see, that *David's* confidence of success is founded on *Goliab's* blasphemy, which had debased him to a brute; and therefore, now he carried no more terror with him, than a lion, or a bear.

There is nothing more offensive, and shocking to the human ear, than self-praise; inasmuch as, it is, ordinarily, the effect of two very offensive, and unlovely passions, self-love, and intemperate vanity: and yet, when it is extorted, as it was here, I know nothing more becoming, or more noble. It is then adorned with all the dignity of self-defence, under the falsest imputation of the heaviest guilt. And yet, *David's* temperance, and modesty are remarkable even here: he describes his combat with the lion, in the shortest, and simplest narration, that ever was made of such a combat; — *I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him*: — and to avoid the tedium of dwelling upon his own exploits, says no more of his combat with the bear, but barely, that he slew him.

And, as if even this were too much, he concludes all, in the style of a man, who had rather escaped, than conquered; — *The Lord, who delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.* Upon which, *Saul*, struck with the steadiness of his resolution,

lution, grounded upon so just, and noble a confidence, immediately cried out; *Go; and the Lord be with thee.*

And now his care was, to see his champion properly provided with arms offensive, and defensive; and accordingly, he put his own armour upon him, an helmet of brass, and coat of mail. And when *David* had girded his sword upon his armour, and assayed to go, he found himself encumbered, and embarrassed by a warlike apparatus, to which he was unaccustomed; and therefore, desiring to be excused from making use of them, he put them off; and, taking his staff in his hand, he chose five smooth stones out of the brook, which divided the hostile armies, and put them in his shepherd's scrip; and so, taking his sling in one hand, and his staff in the other, he advanced towards his adversary. Nor was *Goliath* less forward; for he also advanced to the combat, with his armour-bearer before him. But when, upon a nearer approach to *David*, he discerned his youth, and beauty, he disdained the effeminacy of his aspect; and, filled with indignation, to find himself so contemptuously paired, and assaulted like a dog, with stones and a staff, he vented his rage in reproaches, and execrations, devoted his adversary to the wrath, and vengeance of his gods; and then, calling aloud to him, bid him advance, that he might give his flesh to the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field. To these taunts, and threats *David* only made this answer; *Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.* And then, inspired with a clear foresight of that just vengeance, which this blasphemy would draw down both upon him, and upon those that abetted him, he adds; *This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand *; and I will smite*

* The difference between these threats is remarkable. *Goliath*,
in

smite thee, and thine head from thee; and I will give the carcases of the host of the Philistines, this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth: that all the earth may know, that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know, that the Lord saveth not with sword, and spear: for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands.

So saying, he sprung forward, with anoble alacrity, to meet his antagonist; and, putting his hand into his bag, took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead, and he fell upon his face to the earth.

This done, he ran up to his prostrate enemy, and, standing upon him, drew out his own sword, (for David had none) and cut off his head.

CHAP. V.

The Friendship of David and Jonathan. Some Difficulties in the sacred Text, cleared. David's Combat compared with that of Dioxippus, the Athenian Athlete.

THE Philistines, struck with a sudden consternation, upon the defeat, and death of their champion, fled; and the Israelites, giving a great shout of joy, pursued them, with a dreadful slaughter, to the gates of *Gath* and *Ekron**, their fenced cities; and, then returning, took the spoil of their camp.

When David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner, the king's general, presented him to Saul, with Goliath's head in his hand. What reception Saul gave him, or what conversation David had

in full confidence of his own strength, bids David come up, and I will give thy flesh, &c. David, confiding only in the protection of Providence, retorts, *This day will the Lord deliver thee into my hand*; and then tells him what he is to expect.

* The residences of two of the five Philistine lords.

had with him on that occasion, we know not; but we have reason to believe, that his speech was, agreeable to his preceding conduct, short, and humble, giving God the glory. All that we are told, is, that *Saul* enquired whose son he was: and that when their conversation was ended, *Jonathan*, the king's eldest son, conceived the tenderest, and strongest affection for him, from that moment.

There is an inexpressible dignity in the silence of the scriptures on this, and such-like occasions. Minute descriptions would bring them too near the level of common history; and, on occasions so very extraordinary, would, with all the strictness of truth, debase them even to an air of romance. Whereas, in the present management, the writer's end is fully answered, by a short account of the effects of this conversation, upon the heart of a pious, an intelligent, and heroic youth. We now behold this part of the sacred history, in more than all the dignity of a noble *pourtrait*; in which, *David*, bending to his prince, and laying the head of his fiercest foe at his feet, appears in the fairest light, and noblest attitude, that ever youthful hero was drawn in. Hard indeed would it be to paint out the congenial joy, the glowing gladness of *Jonathan's* generous heart, upon the success of so much piety, and virtue; and as hard, perhaps, to shew the secret workings of *Saul's* growing envy, under all the outward semblance of complacency, and applause.—Sure I am, the subject hath both dignity, and difficulty enough to exercise, and, perhaps, to exhaust, the skill of the noblest artist, that ever adorned the profession.

But, however that may be, the friendship of *David* and *Jonathan*, so suddenly conceived, and so strongly cemented from that moment, is matter of just admiration with all thinking men: and seems to have something in it far transcending the ordinary course of human affections; or, to speak more plainly,
seems

seems to have been, peculiarly, appointed, and raised by providence, for the preservation of *David* *.

One circumstance of this friendship ought not, I think, to be omitted; and that is, that when *Jonathan* and *David* made a covenant, *Jonathan* stript himself of the robe, that was upon him, and gave it to *David*, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle. Whether this might not have given rise to that custom, which hath obtained among the eastern monarchs, of presenting swords, and vests, as marks of favour, and esteem, is submitted to the reader.

But it is time, we now return to clear some difficulties, that have embarrassed this part of the sacred text.

When *David* was recommended to *Saul*, he was recommended as a man prudent, and valiant; whereas, when he was going against *Goliath*, some years after, he is called, in the sacred text, a *youth*, and a *stripling*.

I answer: That the first part of this objection hath been already removed, by shewing, that although *David* was then very young, yet the occasion required, that his age, and character should then be raised as much as possible (*See pag. 20.*): Whereas, both when he was going against a giant, and returning from the conquest, nothing was more natural than to depress both, as much as possible: the first, in order to dissuade him from so desperate an attempt; on the success of which, not only his own safety, but also the safety, and honour of his country depended: and the second was as natural, when he had succeeded, to raise the glory of his conquest, by the opposition of his youth to *Goliath's* established strength; in comparison of whom, he was, in truth, but

* This friendship is thus set forth in the sacred text: *The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.* And again: *Jonathan and David made* (or, as it is in the *Hebrew*, *cut off*) *a covenant, because he loved him, as his own soul.*

but a stripling. So that the words *youth*, and *stripling* are here comparative terms. *David* had now, in all probability, not exceeded his twenty-second year; and, we know, it is common, in our own language, to call persons of that age boys, and children, when compared with men of more years, and experience; and it is evident from the text, that *Goliath* himself considered him in the same light.

There is yet another difficulty, seemingly, greater. When *David* returned from the slaughter of the *Philistine*, *Saul* enquired who he was: which implied, he knew him not; and *Abner* could not tell him. This seems strange, considering, that *David* had been, if not long, yet lately at court, and was in a good degree of favour with *Saul*. But, after all, the difficulty is not very great: *Abner* might have been absent from court, at all the times of *David's* being there; or, if he were present, might have little relish for *David's* musick; and, consequently, taken little notice of him. Besides, *David* had now been absent from court for a year or two *: and they that are acquainted with courts, will be little surprized to find men † unknown, or forgotten, there, by a first minister in less time, who were more considerable than *David*, under the character of a good harper, or of *Saul's* armour-bearer, an employment however, which he never exercised.

Besides all this, one or two years growth of *David's* beard, and stature ‖, added to the influence of the weather upon his complexion, and the roughness of his shepherd's habit, might make a considerable change

* He is generally thought to have been longer absent.

† Or his person might have been known to *Abner*, and yet not his family.

‖ When he was first recommended to *Saul* as a valiant man, he had then, probably, attained to the ordinary size of men, which is not uncommon at eighteen: he was now tall enough to be fitted for *Saul's* armour, and, we know, *Saul's* size exceeded; this might make a considerable change in his appearance, tho' still in the bloom of youth.

change in his person and appearance, and sufficiently disguise him to a man, less disturbed in his understanding than *Saul*, who, possibly, had seldom seen him, or only when he was disturbed. And, in all probability, his memory was much impaired by those disturbances; as it ordinarily is by all fits. Or if it were not, it is well known, that the great often affect to forget persons of meaner condition, especially those, to whom they owe obligations, not very desirable to be remembered.

And yet after all *Saul* might have recollected *David*'s person, and not his parentage, for any thing that appears in the text; for he asked not who he was, but whose son he was; and surely nothing was more natural, than to enquire, of what family that young man was, to whom he had conditionally affianced his daughter.

As there is something very remarkable both in the manner, and event of *David*'s combat with *Goliath*, I hope, I shall be forgiven, if I shut up this head with a short relation of a like combat, recorded by *Curtius* (l. 9. c. 7.); and the only one (except that of the *Epean* and *Ætolian*, mentioned by *Strabo* *) I know of, in all the accounts of antiquity, that hath any resemblance to it.

Dioxippus the *Athenian* †, in high favour with *Alexander the Great*, for his strength, and dexterity at all the *Athletick* exercises, was challenged by *Horratas*, a *Macedonian*, to single combat. He accepted the

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challenge

* Lib. 8. p. 548. edit. *Amstelod.* apud *J. Wolters*, 1707.

† This was he on whom *Diogenes* (as *Ælian* tells us, l. 12. c. 58.) passed that remarkable sarcasm: As he entered into *Athens* in the triumphal manner of the *Olympick* conquerors, and was gazed upon by the people in great crouds; he happened to cast his eyes upon a young lady of distinguished beauty, and falling suddenly, and violently in love, fixed them upon her 'till he passed by, and then, turning back his head, kept them still fixed upon her: which *Diogenes* observing, cried out to the *Athenians*; See here your great champion! See how a young girl hath twisted his neck!

challenge with sufficient contempt ; and to shew it, appeared at the place appointed, naked, anointed, and crowned as a conqueror in the *Olympick* games, with only a small, purple mantle, wrapped round his left hand, and a knotty club in his right. *Horratas* came to the field of battle in complete armour, with a shield, and sword, a lancet in his right hand, and a spear in his left, and began the fight by darting his lance at his adversary ; which he, by a little bent of his body, easily declined ; and before *Horratas* could shift his spear into his right hand, broke it to pieces by a blow of his club. *Horratas* then attempted to draw his sword ; but before that could be effected, *Dioxippus*, with a joint-effort of his head, and foot, at once knock'd up his heels, and beat him to the earth ; then catching up his sword, and putting his foot upon his neck, stood over him, with his up-lifted Club, ready with one blow to beat out his brains, until *Alexander* interposed to save his life.

This is a strong instance of the triumph of skill, and activity over the completest armature : and, I hope, the singularity of the adventure will, with the curious reader, compensate for the length of the digression. I now resume the thread of my History.

The unscriptural reader may, possibly, have some curiosity to know how *David* disposed of *Goliath's* spoils : at least, may not take it amiss to be informed, that his armour was first deposited in *David's* tent ; that is, either the tent belonging to his brethren, or some other now erected for his use ; possibly, that of *Goliath*, taken in spoiling the *Philistine* camp. His sword was hung up, as a trophy of thanksgiving to God, in the tabernacle * ; and his head conveyed to *Jerusalem*, then in the possession of

* Possibly, from hence came that custom among the ancient *Greeks* and *Romans*, of depositing their arms in their temples.

of the *Israelites*; tho' the strong fort of *Sion* still held out for the *Jebusites*.

And, possibly, one end of carrying it thither might be, to strike a terror into that garrison; tho' it was, more probably, deposited there, in a prophetick foresight of that city's becoming one day the capital of *David*. And if I may be indulged a conjecture, I own, to me it seems not impossible, that all the histories we have of heads, found in the foundations of cities, which afterwards became great and eminent, such as those of *Rome*, and *Carthage*, might be derived from some imperfect, or designedly obscured tradition of the history of this head.

Nor will the reader, perhaps, think this a very strained conjecture, who considers the great, and allowed uncertainties in the accounts of the *Roman* originals, that when the best *Roman* historians wrote *, there were no records, of, almost, the first four hundred years of their city, extant; being all consumed (if they had any) in the burning of the city by the *Gauls*, *A. U. C.* 363. and, therefore, their study was, to make its origine as strange, and stupendous, as they could devise it; and, in order to do so, they crouded into that, the most extraordinary accounts of other countries †.

* Their first historian, *Quintus Fabius Pictor*, was 160 years later than this period; he flourished about twenty, or thirty years after the translation of the *Septuagint*, and took most of his accounts from *Diocles Peparthicus*, a *Greek*. Whether the history of the capitol be so old, I cannot say, but it is evidently later than the version of the *LXX*.

† This might be illustrated by many examples: I shall instance only in one. Whoever compares the account of the *Roman* beginning, consisting only of men, and the rape of the *Sabines*, contrived for their increase, with the history of the *Benjamites*, in the three last chapters of the book of *Judges*, will, I believe, be quickly of my opinion.

C H A P. VI.

*The Rise and Effects of Saul's Enmity to David.
Merab promised to David, and given to another.*

DAVID, now continuing at court, was employed by Saul on various occasions: and, as he still acquitted himself wisely, Saul, in some time, set him over his men of war; that is, as it is commonly understood, made him captain of his guards. But this degree of favour lasted not long; for now Saul's envy, and malignity returned strong upon him, with his evil spirit. The occasion was thus:

As Saul returned in triumph from the *Philistine* war, the women, from all the cities of *Israel*, came to meet him, to congratulate his conquests, with songs, and various instruments of musick; and as they sang together, they blended the praises of Saul, and David in their chorus: but with this distinction; *Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.*

The haughty heart of Saul could ill digest this preference; his resentment brought back all his black passions into his breast, and refitted him for the possession of the evil spirit: *And Saul was wroth, (says the text) and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands; and what can he have more but the kingdom? — And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house.* From hence it is evident, that the expression of *prophesying* is applicable to the influence either of evil, or good spirits; and it is applied, both by *Plato*, and *Plutarch*, to the agitations of the *Sibyls*, and other enthusiasts, who were, as the Heathens expressed it, possessed by the god: so that the very Heathens ascribed such agitations to a supernatural agency.

Thus

Thus much is certain : *Saul's* mind was now disturbed to such a degree, that *David's* musick had no more power over him *. This quickly appeared ; for as he played to calm him, *Saul*, determined upon his destruction, and, watching his opportunity, with a javelin in his hand, darted it at him : which *David* (with a felicity exceeding that of *Dioxippus*) twice declined : then, being sufficiently warned of his danger, he avoided *Saul's* presence.

Saul's envy now began to be haunted with terror ; that a man, so excellent at his weapons as he was, should now twice miss his aim, and at so near a distance, had something in it very extraordinary ! And it was very natural for him to think, this could not be, without a remarkable interposition of Providence in *David's* behalf. Such an interposition must be for some extraordinary end. And what end could that, so probably, be, as his designation to royalty ? He knew, his kingdom was given away to a better man than himself (the prophet had expressly declared that) : And who was, so probably, this better man, as the man, whom all *Israel* preferred to him ?

Full of this fear, he removes *David* from him, by an honourable exile : he made him captain over a thousand : but where, or at what distance, is not said. All that we know, is, that here also *David* behaved himself with remarkable prudence, and good conduct ; which, instead of reconciling *Saul* to him, served, only to inflame his fears the more : *Wherefore* (says the text) *when Saul saw, that he behaved himself very wisely, he was afraid of him : but all Israel, and Judah loved David, because he went out, and came in before them.* He headed them in all their expeditions, with a bravery, and a conduct, equally distinguished : greatest in command, yet greater in his example ! which naturally won the

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affections

* To this, possibly may allude that passage in the lviith Psalm, — *which refuse to hear the voice of the charmer, &c.*

affections of the people to him ; insomuch, that it might be said, with great truth, of him, and his master *Saul*, what was afterwards observed of *Germanicus*, and *Tiberius*, that the one reigned, in the hearts of the people, the other, only in the provinces.

It were hard to paint out the distempered state of *Saul's* mind, under the continued series of *David's* successes ; the sight rack'd him : but, at the same time, he had sagacity enough to derive some consolation from it. *David*, it is true, was often successful ; but it did not follow, that he must *always* be so : he had prudence, prowess, and conduct ; but all these are often disappointed and defeated in their best-laid schemes. What means then so likely to destroy him, as flattering him in his good fortune, and inflaming his vanity to yet higher, and bolder attempts ? What human heart is proof against flattery well conducted ? and what so likely to point it right, as the prospect of the king's alliance ? And now *Merab*, the king's eldest daughter, is promised to him in marriage, on condition of his exerting all his fortitude, in the defence of his master, and his country, against the enemies of God, and them.

This was the bait laid for his destruction : Had *Saul* killed *David*, when he attempted him with his javelin, his madness might have pleaded his defence. Nor was *David* then so thoroughly established in the affections of the people ; such an attempt must now be attended with more hazard : nor could it be acquitted of deliberate design ; and therefore, this other method was fixed upon : *And Saul said unto David, Behold my elder daughter Merab, her will I give thee to wife ; only be thou valiant for me, and fight the Lord's battles, for Saul said, Let not mine hand be upon him, but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him.*

David's answer to this tempting promise, is to me, I own, no ill presumption of his being swayed by

by something more than human: And, indeed, what less, than some heavenly influence, could set the soul of an obscure youth, suddenly exalted, so far above the reach of the highest, and strongest temptations *! He did not, indeed, decline the honour proposed to him; that prudence, and decency forbade; but he did more: instead of claiming, or even accepting it as his right, he declined all appearance of pretending to it, on the score of merit: *And David said unto Saul, Who am I, and what is my life, or my father's family in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king?* It is true, he had often hazarded his life in the service of his prince: but what was such a life as his, compared with the honour of such an alliance?

How far he merited this honour by his subsequent behaviour, is no-where particularly told us; and, indeed, was unnecessary to be told, being sufficiently implied in those characters of prudence, wisdom, and valour, which distinguished his whole conduct. However, we are informed, that when the time came for conferring it, *Saul*, most shamefully violated his promise, and gave *Merab* to another, to *Adriel*, the *Mebolatbite*.

This indignity, and disappointment seem to be attended with all the circumstances that could heighten both. Probably, the match was delayed, to endear it the more; and when *David's* hopes were at the height, (and, it may be, his affection fixed) they were dashed at once.

It is finely observed of the courts of tyrants, that in them favours are wont to come slow, and injuries sudden; *Lenta beneficia, injuriæ præcipites!*

This treatment was well able to exasperate a spirit, less sensible of injuries than *David's*, to the highest

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* She was due to him before (says the learned Doctor *Trop.*) by promise, for killing *Goliath*; yet, he that twice enquired into the reward of that enterprize, before he undertook it, never demanded it, after that atchievement.

highest degree ; and, in all appearance, was intended to do so ; that some act of outrage, or intemperance of expression, too natural on such an occasion, might supply some pretence of vengeance upon him ; but this snare also the spirit of God delivered him from.

C H A P. VII.

Michal promised to David. The Nature of the required Dower explained at large.

SAUL's vengeance being thus disappointed, he soon found another occasion of wreaking it upon him, as he hoped, to more advantage.

Michal, Saul's second daughter, beheld *David* with other eyes, than those of her father's enmity : in all probability, *David's* merit, added to her brother *Jonathan's* friendship, and affection for him, wrought upon her. But whatever influence *Jonathan's* friendship, or *David's* character, and accomplishments, had upon her, she seems to have had prudence, and virtue enough, not to indulge her desires, as long as there was any prospect of his matching with her elder sister ; for we hear nothing of her liking to *David*, until after *Merab's* marriage ; then it was, that *Saul* was first informed of it.

He received the account with joy : *The thing pleased him* (says the text), and *Saul said, I will give him her, that she may be a snare to him** : and that the band of the Philistines may be against him. He resolved to give her to him, as *Antiochus the Great* gave *Cleopatra*, his daughter, to *Ptolemy Epiphanes*, king of *Egypt*, thinking to use her, as an instrument to destroy him, and was disappointed, as *Antiochus* was ; for *Michal* clave to her husband, as *Cleopatra* did, and as *Daniel* had foretold †.

But.

* 1 Sam. xviii. 17.

† *She shall not stand on his side*, Dan. xi. 17. Dr. Trapp observes,

But it seems, there was some difficulty in the point, from the *Afiatick* custom of purchasing Wives, and that in proportion to their dignity: a difficulty, which *David's* condition, in point of fortune, ill enabled him to overcome; and such as *Saul's* express, and publick stipulation in the affair of *Goliath*, should have made him ashamed to insist on. However, *Saul* took care to make it, at once, very insidious, and not insuperable; and then commanded his servants to communicate the matter to *David*, and place it in the fairest, and most tempting light before him. They told him, according to their instructions, that the king delighted in him, and all his servants loved him, and he must be the king's son-in-law. And when *David*, in his humility, excused himself from the impossibility of his paying the dower * of so great a prince's daughter, they proposed an expedient, which, they judged, his magnanimity would readily embrace; *The king* (say they) *desireth not a dowry, but an hundred fore-skins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies.* His design in this, the text assures us, was, *to make him fall by the hand of the Philistines*: this was the design that swayed him from the first. It is true, *Merab* was due to *David* by publick stipulation: but when *Saul* promis'd her to him, he added this express condition, before-mentioned, that he should *fight the Lord's battles*, upon the hopes of his falling in them, 1 Sam. xviii. 17.

When *David* had escaped this snare, *Saul* then laid another for him, which he thought much surer; and that was, the dower of the *fore-skins* now mentioned;

serves, that man and wife are the two branches in the prophet *Ezekiel's* hand, inclosed in one bark, and so closely together, that they make but one piece.

* And *David* said, seemeth it to you a light thing to be a king's son-in-law, seeing that I am a poor man, and lightly esteemed? chap. xviii. 23. Some think, that this Excuse hath a mixture of courtly resentment in it; and, possibly, it may.

tioned ; and to bring the matter to a speedy issue, he stinted him to a limited time, for fulfilling the condition.

David had, in his humility, declined the honour of the king's alliance, by this daughter, as well as the other : but when the condition of the *fore-skins* was once proposed, he could now no longer decline it, without the imputation of cowardice. And, certainly, a more probable expedient for his ruin, could not have been thought on. This we shall soon be convinced of, when we consider, that all these hundred enemies, whose *fore-skins* were to be presented to *Saul*, must fall by *David's* own hands ; nor could *Saul's* end be otherwise answered : his aim was, to bring *David* so often into immediate, and personal danger, and such as it was hardly possible, he should so often escape : whereas, had he been allowed to complete his number, with those slain by his thousand men, over whom he was captain, this might have been effected, with little, and unrepeated danger. So that his thousand men, who attended him, tho' it is not to be imagined, they were idle spectators on all these occasions ; yet, as far as related to the number of *fore-skins* required of *David*, they were, in effect, but so many witnesses, to see *Saul's* purposes faithfully fulfilled.

David knew all this very well ; yet did all this no way deter him from chearfully accepting the condition. Difficulty (saith a learned commentator * upon the text) doth but whet heroick spirits : he now rejoiced, like *Alexander*, to find a danger equal to his spirit † ; and at once to prevent all possibility of cavil, and do ampler honour to his spouse, he doubled her dower ‡. Nor will his doing so, even under these circumstances, appear incredible, when we

* Dr. Trapp.

† *Periculum par animo.*

‡ That the custom of paying dowries for wives, obtained among the Jews, appears from *Gen.* xxxiv. 12. and *Exod.* xxii. 16, 17.

we consider the account left us of *Aurelian*, by *Flavius Vopiscus* * ; or the account of some of *David's* worthies, in scripture † ; or the accounts transmitted to us by travellers, of some parts of *Africa*, where no man is allowed to give quarter to an enemy, until he hath an hundred of such trophies to produce, in testimony of his valour ‖ ; which their wives wear, and make account of, as of their most valuable ornaments.

This reasoning seems also confirmed by the letter of the text, which tells us, that *David arose, and went, he, and his men, and slew of the Philistines two hundred men, &c.* Where it is observable, that the word *slew* is of the singular number ; which seems to imply, that this slaughter was his own act.

The same conclusion is also to be fairly, collected from the subsequent verse ; for when we are told, that *Saul* now gave him *Michal* his daughter to wife, it is immediately added, that *Saul saw, and knew that the Lord was with David.* This he had reason to conclude, from the extraordinary deliverance wrought in his favour, in the successive conquest of two hundred enemies by his own hand : whereas, had this been effected by the assistance of a thousand associates, there had surely been nothing extraordinary in it.

And here I cannot but reflect, with united grief, and horror, upon the lost condition of *Saul's* mind at this time. He saw, and knew *the hand of God* in the extraordinary preservation of *David*, and yet he persisted to pursue his ruin.

To

* He tells us, that the emperor *Aurelian* slew a thousand *Sarmatians* in one single war, with his own hands.

† 1 Chron. xi, 11, 20. Ver. 11. *Jashobeam an Hachmonite, he lift up his spear against three hundred, slain by him at one time.* Ver. 20. *Abishai, he was chief of the three ; for, lifting up his spear against three hundred, he slew them.*

‖ *Mandefso*, p. 213.

To all this may be added, that *Saul's* fear, and hatred of *David*, which, the text tells us, were increased on this occasion, are a further, and full confirmation of the same truth ; inasmuch as the slaughter of two hundred men by the hands of a thousand, within the limits of a proper space of time, had neither been matter of envy, or enmity to *Saul*, who had himself atchieved far greater exploits.

Notwithstanding the imminent danger, *David* now ran, there is no question, but *Saul* would still have been glad of some pretence for not performing his promise : but the stipulation being so publick, and repeated, it was impossible to elude it.

However, *David's* danger ended not here : *Saul* easily foresaw, that this dowry of *David's* would, naturally, excite the enmity of the whole *Philistine* nation against him, as it quickly did ; for the *Philistine* forces now assembled, and warred against *Israel*. And, I believe, it will be matter of no doubt with the thinking reader, at whom their vengeance was chiefly aimed. Had *Saul* gone out against them, in person, on this occasion, there is no doubt, but he had been a joint object of their resentment. But there is no reason from the text, to believe that he did ; and I think it probable, that he chose rather to let *David* stand the single mark of their fury : but to no purpose ; for *David's* success, and reputation always increased with his danger : *David* (says the text) *behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul, so that his name was much set by.*

If it be asked, why *Saul* required a dower of *fore-skins*, rather than of heads, the answer is obvious ; heads would have made no distinction between *Jews* and *Philistines* : and *Saul*, whose suspicions were all awake, surmised to himself, that *David*, in that case, might slay an hundred of his subjects, and bring
 . their's

their's instead of *Philistine* heads ; and therefore, he required so many *fore-skins*, which the *Israelites* had not, that he might be sure, he killed so many enemies. And therefore, *Josepbus*, who changes the condition from *fore-skins* to heads, hath, with great submission, very injudiciously departed from the sacred text.

There is one obvious inference from this account, and that is, that the *Philistine* nation had not yet practised the rite of circumcision.

C H A P. VIII.

Saul's Persecutions continued. David's signal Deliverances.

AND now *Saul's* detestation of *David*, could no longer be kept within the bounds of secret machinations, but broke forth into outrage, insomuch that he communes both with his son, and servants to destroy him ; or, to speak in the style of *Tacitus*, he *disclosed his wicked purpose ; and, for that reason, could not execute it **,

Surely, nothing could be more providential for *David*, than that *Jonathan* was let into the secret : this faithful friend soon warned him of his danger, and cautioned him to hide himself, for that night, in a secret place, which they had agreed upon ; assuring him, that he would, the next day, take an occasion of communing with his father about him, near the place of his concealment †, and acquaint him

* *Detexit facinus, fatuus & non implevit.*

† Doubtless, *Jonathan* chose this as the place of conference with *Saul*, that, if his intercession should prove ineffectual, and *Saul's* anger should break out into loud threats, as probably it would, *David* might be warned of his danger ; or, if *Saul* should prove inexorable, and yet keep his passion within bounds, *Jonathan* himself might, by some complaint, or some signal agreed on, give his friend some indication of his ill success ; which, possibly, he might otherwise find no opportunity of communicating to him with that dispatch, which his danger might require.

him with the issue of the conference. They met accordingly, and *Jonathan's* friendship displayed itself in all its glory.

There is something so powerful, in the cordial, candid, seasonable, and affectionate intercession of a true friend, as can hardly be resisted; as can hardly fail to work its way into the most obdurate breast.

When *Saul* communicated his design to his servants, and his son, *Jonathan* received it in a prudential, and well-judged silence; he would not, openly, oppose his father's purposes, neither would he irritate him (now, probably, in a passion) by an untimely opposition; he waited, with the patience of a wise physician, to administer his medicine, when the patient was in best temper to receive it: he watched his time, and the next day, in the cool of the morning, drew his father into a retired, and secret conference; and then it was, that he urged his intercession, with so much fidelity, and address, added to a dutiful zeal, and most becoming concern for his father's honour, that *Saul's* heart was softened, and his resentments conquered. Hear the intercession in his own words: the text tells us, first, in the general, that he spake good of his friend; and then added, *Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works have been to thee-ward very good; for he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the Lord wrought a great salvation for all Israel: thou sawest it, and didst rejoice. Wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause?*

The intelligent reader will, I am persuaded, find, in all the seeming simplicity of this plain, and short intercession, all the strength of reasoning, and all the skill, and delicacy of address, that could, possibly, be crowded into so few words. He had much more to say in *David's* favour; but he well knew, that

to enumerate his merits, would be to inflame his father's enmity ; and therefore, though he mentioned *David's* merits in general, he insisted only upon that single point, in which, *Saul* himself had some merit, and much complacency ; and he well knew, that the bare remembrance of it, would bring back to his father's mind, the greatness and the generosity of the prize proposed, which excited *David's* valour, and the felicity, and glory of the event, in which *Saul* himself had so great a share.

Thus he judged ; and how rightly he did so, the event, sufficiently informs us : *And Saul (saith the text) hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan : and Saul swore, As the Lord liveth, he shall not be slain.*

The generous reader will, easily, judge with what a flow of joy, *Jonathan* received this assurance, and how eagerly he communicated it to his friend ; how gladly he brought him back, introduced him to his father, and, in all appearance, reinstated him in his former favour.

However, this gleam of sun-shine lasted not long. A new war broke out with the *Philistines* : *David* again commanded in it, and was again successful. A decisive battle was fought : the enemy was defeated with a great slaughter, and utterly put to flight ; and *David* returned to court, victorious, and safe ; and with him *Saul's* envy, and its attendant spirit.

David had now too much merit, and too many virtues, to be borne any longer ; and he must die, for the same reason, that, *Seneca* tells us, *Gracinus Julius* did, because he was a better man, than it was expedient for the tyrant that he should be*. His kingdom, he knew, was given away to a better man : And who, so eminently a better man than himself, as *David* ! And now, when the evil spirit from the Lord came upon *Saul*, he had recourse to his usual remedy ;

* Sen. de Benef. lib. 2. c. 21.

remedy ; *David* played, but it was to the deaf adder, which refused to hear the voice of the charmer.

How sad, and shocking a scene was this ! *David* labouring, with all his study, and skill, to relieve *Saul's* anguish ; and *Saul*, in the same instant, meditating his destruction ! sitting fullen, and determined, with his javelin in his hand, watching his opportunity, and waiting, perhaps, but till the power of musick had so far calmed his spirits, as to steady his hand, he darted his spear at *David* with all his might, and with such force, that, he happily declining it, it pierced, and stuck into the wall : and *David* fled.

The reflecting reader cannot fail to observe, and to adore the Providence, by which *David* was once more, so signally, protected, and delivered. Nor can he well avoid revolving in his mind, that very late, and solemn oath, by which *Saul* obliged himself to abstain from *David's* destruction ; an obligation now sacrificed to the gratification of that evil spirit, that reigned within him.

How others have observed, I cannot say ; but, I believe, it will generally be found true, than whenever we meet with any account of a murderous, a treacherous, a perjured prince, we may expect to be soon informed, of some signal judgments, and chastisements from God upon him. And give me leave to add, that, in the little circle of my own observation, I have very seldom (if ever) been disappointed.

When *Saul* had now added perjury to his other evil devices, his conscience became seared, and his designs desperate. *David* had escaped to his house, but *Saul's* guards quickly pursued him thither, with express orders from their master, to compass it for that night, so as he should not escape, and to slay him in the morning.

And here is the first instance of infatuation upon his wicked counsels, If *David* was to be destroyed,
why

why not that very night? To what purpose to defer it, unless to give *David* some better chance for escaping? Which accordingly came to pass; for *Micbal*, anxious for her husband's safety, and more suspicious of danger, as by nature more timorous, either observed, or had some intimation of the assassins, that incompassed the house, and immediately urged her husband, to make his escape that instant; and to effect it the better, she let him down through a window; and he fled, and was delivered.

This done, her next care was, how to delude his murderers, and, by that means, delay their pursuit. She dressed up an image, covered it with a cloth, and laid it upon a pillow of goats hair, as the text is commonly understood; or rather, set off the head of it with goats hair, resembling her husband's*: and when the assassins entered to secure, and to slay *David*, she told them *he was sick*, and shewed him to them, as they thought, stretched upon his bed.

This device put them to a stand. *David* was sick; and, possibly, *Saul* would rather wait the chance, of seeing him carried off by a natural death, than embroil his hands in the blood of his benefactor. — Murder is, I believe, a hateful office to the basest spirit; but it is dreadful to the brave. And although it be natural to think the worst, of men employed in such offices; yet it is obvious to imagine, that they were well enough pleased, to have the matter remitted to their master, and to wait for new orders, upon an affair of so much importance, and such difficult determination.

They did so; and were soon remanded with express orders, to bring *David* in his bed, sick as he was, to *Saul*, that he might have the cruel satisfaction, of slaying him with his own hands.

VOL. I.

E

When

* The oriental goat is distinguished by the most shining and silky hair in the world.

When they returned upon this errand, they, soon, discovered the cheat, that *Michal* had put upon them, and found the image, instead of *David*.

The bloodiness of *Saul*'s intention, makes it easy to conjecture the fury of his resentment, upon the disappointment of his horrid purpose ; he expostulated with *Michal*, upon the deceit, put upon her father, and the escape, contrived for his enemy : both which she excused by another artifice ; pleading necessity, and the imminent danger of her life, if she declined lending *David* her assistance.

Michal is observed by criticks, to have nothing virtuous, or valuable in her character *, except this instance of conjugal fidelity, and affection ; and yet, even this is very much obscured, by that gross falshood, which, to disguise it to her father, disgraced her husband. How much nobler, and more amiable, was that honest veracity of the wife of *Polyxenus*, who, being reproached by her brother *Dionysius*, the *Sicilian* Tyrant, for being conscious to her husband's flight, without discovering it, tho' she knew, he was accused of treason against him ; asked the tyrant, Whether he could think her so degenerate, as to know of her husband's flight, without sharing all the danger of it with him ?

However, this conduct of *Michal* suggests a fair occasion, of reflecting, once more, upon the infatuation of *Saul*'s counsels : that very daughter, which he gave to *David*, as a bait, and a snare, is now made the sure, and only means of his preservation.

* She is supposed by some to have been an idolatress, by the Teraphim, which deceived *Saul*'s messengers ; and she after reproached her husband, with his dancing in honour of God.

C H A P. IX.

A Conjecture concerning the Circumstances of this Escape, grounded on the xviiith Psalm; submitted to the candid Reader. The Tempest described in this Psalm, compared with that of Virgil, in the first Georgic.

THE indulgent reader, will, I hope, allow me, at least, pardon me in a conjecture, that a considerable part of the xviiith Psalm may refer to the escape, recounted in the last chapter: I mean, from the 1st to the 29th verse inclusive.

That the 29th verse refers to this escape, can, I think, be no permanent doubt with any man, that compares it with the foregoing history: *By thee, I have run through a troop, and by my God, have I leaped over a wall.*

When Michal let David down thro' a window, (suppose it a back-window, as, in all probability, it was) and suppose a back wall to be leaped over, he was still in a city; and there was no possibility of escaping, without leaping over the city-wall, as well as slipping through the city-watch: he never was under the same necessity, at any other time, that we know of; and, therefore, this verse must have reference to this time.

This then may, I think, be numbered among what, the mathematicians call *data*; that is, confessed, and granted truths. And, for my part, I can see no reason, why a fair, candid historian should not be allowed the liberty, indulged to the mathematicians, to deduce from one confessed truth, such consequences, and discoveries, as, naturally, arise from thence. Since, then, the latter part of this verse, plainly refers to this time, and to this alone; why may we not reasonably conclude, that the former part of the same verse, or sentence, (for it is but one sentence) relates to it also? And, indeed, I think it hardly possible, that David should refer to two dif-

ferent times, and transactions, in one, and the same sentence. Now, if they both refer to the same transaction, there is but one of two things, to be understood by it; and that is, that the troop, *David* now ran through, was either the city-guard, or a troop sent by *Saul* to pursue him. If you suppose it any city-guard, or watch, is it to be imagined, but that they also would pursue him? And, on the other hand, is any thing more credible, than that *Saul*, as soon as he heard of *David's* escape, immediately, sent out parties, in pursuit of him?

David, upon finding his house encompassed by armed men, had recourse, as usual, to GOD: and the sum of his prayer, on that occasion, is still recorded in the lixth psalm. This took up some time: he had his own servants to deceive, as well as the assassines; some time must be taken up, to prepare for his escape, and he must wait, until the streets were cleared; it must be late in the night, before he could make his escape. He was alone, unarmed, and in the dark. To whom could he fly? and in whom could he confide? Danger creates distrust, and distrust delay.—*Saul* had reason enough to believe, he could not be got off very far; his fury inflamed his hopes, and his hopes winged his ministers.

Taking it for granted, then, that *David* was now pursued, a considerable part of this Psalm, is a plain narrative of his danger, and his deliverance, by a very extraordinary interposition of providence.

His enemies, after some time, came up to him, and encompassed him: he then gave himself up, as now in the very arms of death. How nobly, and how poetically, is this distress painted, in the 4th, and 5th verses of this psalm! *The cords of death encompassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. The cords of hell surrounded me; the snares of death prevented me.*

He

He then cried out to GOD for relief; and GOD, who never failed him, sent out his thunder, a tempest, and an earthquake; which amazed, affrighted, and dispersed his enemies, and delivered him out of his distress. How gloriously, and beyond all poetick comparison, are this earthquake, tempest, and thunder described, in the 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, and 15th verses of this (the 18th) psalm.

I know but one description, in the whole compass of heathen poetry, that deserves once to be named with it; and that is, *Virgil's* noble description of a tempest, in the first of his *Georgics*, and to me, the noblest effort of his genius! The classick reader will not, I hope, think much to indulge me, a few moments, in a short comparison, and criticism upon them both.

David's account of the tempest, which scattered his enemies, and delivered him, stands thus:

Psal. xviii. ver. 6. *In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God. He heard my voice out of his temple; my cry, in his presence, entered into his ears.*

Ver. 7. *And the earth trembled, and shook, and the foundations of the mountains trembled, and were tossed, because he was wroth.*

Ver. 8. *Smoke ascended from his nostrils, and fire devoured from his mouth; coals were kindled at it.*

Ver. 9. *And he bowed the heavens, and came down; and darkness was under his feet.*

Ver. 10. *And he rode upon a cherub, and flew; and flew swift, on the wings of the wind*.*

Ver. 11. *He made darkness his secret place: his pavilion round about him, the darkness of waters in the clouds of heaven.*

E 3

Ver.

* How admirably does the sound of the original sentence correspond to the sense! let the *English* reader judge:

Al canphe ruah,
On the wings of the wind. I never could read these words, but I imagined, I heard the clang of a wing.

Ver. 12. *At the brightness before him, his clouds passed away **, hail-stones, and coals of fire.

Ver. 13. *And the Lord thundered in the heavens, and the most High gave his voice; hail-stones, and coals of fire.*

Ver. 14. *And he sent out his arrows, and tore, and dispersed them; and multiplied his lightnings, and confounded them †.*

Ver. 15. *The beds of the waters appeared; the foundations of the world were uncovered, at thy rebuke, O Lord; at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.*

VIRGIL'S *Tempest* is well known.

*Sæpe etiam immensum cælo venit agmen aquarum,
Et sædam glomerant tempestatem imbris atris
Collectæ ex alto nubes. Ruit arduus æther,
Et pluviam ingenti sata læta, boùmque labores
Diluit. Implentur fossæ, & cava flumina crescunt
Cum sonitu, fervetque fretis spirantibus æquor.
Ipse pater, mediâ nimborum in nocte, coruscâ
Fulmina molitur dextrâ. Quo maxima motu
Terra tremit: fugere feræ; & mortalia corda
Per gentes humilis stravit pavor. Ille flagranti
Aut Atho, aut Rhodopen, aut alta Ceraunia telo
Dejicit. Ingeminant austri, & densissimus imber
Nunc nemora ingenti vento, nunc litora plangit.*

These noble lines are thus translated, with uncommon spirit, closeness, and justness, by an anonymous author, in a work, entitled, *Virgil's Husbandry; or, an Essay on the Georgics*, Lond. 1725.

Oft

* *Abkaiw abheru,*
His clouds passed.

† *Überakim rabb wajeubummem.* If the rattling, and pounding of thunder be not better expressed by these words, than any I ever heard, I must own, I have no notion of the significancy of sounds.

Oft from above descends a troop of floods ;
 Oft gather from the deep the thick'ning clouds ;
 Down rush the skies, and, with impetuous rain,
 Wash out the ox's toil, and sweep away the grain :
 The dikes are fill'd, no bounds the torrents keep ;
 And with the breathing surges boils the deep :
 Amidst a night of clouds, his glitt'ring fire,
 And rattling thunder, hurls th' eternal Sire :
 Far shakes the earth : beasts fly, and mortal hearts
 Pale fear dejects : He with refulgent darts,
 Or Rhodope, or Atho's lofty crown,
 Or steep Ceraunia's cliffs strikes headlong down :
 The rains condense, more furious Auster roars ;
 Now, with vast winds the woods, now, lashes he the
 [shores.

Mr. DRYDEN's translation is more diffused : but the reader will perceive, how much he thought, some of David's ideas would adorn it.

And oft whole sheets descend of sluicy rain,
 Suck'd by the spongy clouds from off the main :
 The lofty skies at once come pouring down,
 The promis'd crop, and golden labours, drown.
 The dikes are fill'd, and, with a roaring sound,
 The rising rivers float the nether ground ;
 And rocks the bellowing voice of boiling seas rebound. }
 The father of the gods his glory shrouds,
 Involv'd in tempests, and a night of clouds ;
 And from the middle darkness flashing out
 By fits, he deals his fiery bolts about.
 Earth feels the motions of her angry god,
 Her intrails tremble, and her mountains nod ;
 And flying beasts in forests seek abode : }
 Deep horror seizes ev'ry human breast ;
 Their pride is humbled, and their fear confess'd :
 While He from high his rolling thunder throws,
 And fires the mountains with repeated blows :

*The rocks are from their old foundations rent ;
 The winds redouble, and the rains augment :
 The waves on heaps are dash'd against the shore,
 And now, the woods, and now, the billows roar.*

The learned reader, hath now both descriptions, fairly before him, and will supply, from his own better judgment, whatever is defective in each translation. I shall beg leave, to point out the beauties of both ; and when I have done so, the reader will determine for himself :

Ver. 6. *He heard my voice out of his temple.* Can there be a nobler idea, than to consider the heavens as the temple of God ! This temple encompasses the universe, and there, the whole creation, are in the presence of their Maker.

Ver. 7, &c. *He was wroth, and the earth trembled, and shook. — He bowed the heavens, and came down. — He rode upon a cherub. — He flew upon the wings of the wind. — He made darkness his pavilion. — At the brightness before him his clouds passed away.*

The grandeur of these ideas, is much easier conceived, than explained.

What poetry ever equalled the magnificence of this stile ! What ideas of the Divinity does it inspire ! What must we think of that mighty Being, at whose wrath *the earth trembles*, and the heavens are humbled at his feet ! *Angels, and winds* his vehicles ! His voice is *thunder* ; and *lightnings* the kindling of his *breath* ! His Majesty veiled in *darkness* ; and yet even so, *the clouds passing away at the glory, that went before him !*

In *Virgil*, *Jupiter*, in the dark center of his showers, deals about his thunders, with his flaming right-hand : earth trembles at the mighty motion ; the beasts of the forest fly ; and humble fear prostrates the haughty heart of man.

Nothing can be more nobly terrible, than the former part of this description, nor more affecting,
 and

and touching than the last ! For my own part, I never read it, but my blood was curdled, and my pride quelled.

He goes on : — “ He (that is, *Jupiter*) beats down *Atho*, or *Rhodope*, or the lofty *Ceraunian* promontory, with his red-hot bolts : — The winds double, and the showers thicken ; the forests, and the shores resound.”

You see the lightnings fly, in this description. You hear the rattling of the thunder, in that noble line (and the beginning of the next) ;

*Aut Atho, aut Rhodopen, aut alta Ceraunia telo
Dèjicit.*——

You hear the crash of the falling mountains ; the thickening shower patters in your ears, and the tempest roars.

All this is unquestionably noble : — but the reader will observe this essential, and truly poetick difference, between the two descriptions ; that in *Virgil*, every thing but the thunder, is natural action, and even that is acted, and wielded, with dreadful force ; the effect of which motion, is an earthquake.

In *David*, the whole universe is animated at the presence of God, affrighted at his wrath, and obedient to his beck ! *God is angry ; and the earth trembles : and coals kindle at his breath ; and hail-stones fly before him.*

Virgil's Jupiter wields his thunders :

Jehovah commands his, and they obey. *Jupiter* deals about his bolts, in the attitude of an heated hero ; or, to speak more properly, a giant of resistless strength ! *Jehovah* but sends out his arrows ; they know what to do : they *tear*, and *disperse*, and his *lightnings confound*.

Jupiter is angry, and he beats down a mountain ! *Jehovah* is wroth, and the earth feels it ; and the foundations of the mountains are tossed to and fro, tremble, and shake, like the joints of an affrighted man !

man! At one *blast of his breath*, the ocean opens, to her deepest channels; and the foundations of the earth, are bared before him.

In a word: *Virgil's* description is truly noble; but *David's* beyond all expression grand!

To all this may be added, that *David* wrote first: and if *Ovid* read *Moses*, possibly, *Virgil* read *David*. I believe, he read *David*, because, I am sure, he read *Isaiab*.

This, at least, must be allowed, that earthquakes are not the natural effects of thunder. They are united in *David's* description, and so they are in *Virgil's*: They are the effects of God's wrath, in *David*; they are the effects of the angry motion of *Jupiter's* right-hand, in *Virgil*.

It must also be owned, that *Virgil's Jupiter*, in a night of clouds, is very like *David's Jehovah*, encompassed with *darkness*, in the *waters* of the *clouds of heaven*! In this, indeed, *Jehovah* has the advantage, that his glory cannot be wholly shrouded; some gleams of it still flash out, as he passes, and dispel the clouds.

I beg to conclude, with one short observation, and that is, that the painting in the 12th, and 13th verses of this psalm, is to my imagination, by much the finest, I ever saw in poetry: — *At the brightness before him his clouds passed away, hail-stones, and coals of fire: —*

And the Lord thundered in the heavens, and the most High gave his voice; hail-stones, and coals of fire. The poet was too transported, to wait for auxiliary verbs, and connecting particles! The description is, to me, a noble picture, in which the gusts of hail, and flashes of fire burst out from the clouds, with as much spirit, and force as in a real tempest.

It is now time to return, and resume the thread of our history.

When *Saul* found, that *David* had, entirely, escaped the pursuers, he summoned a council, (whether the
Sanhedrim,

Sanbedrim, or what is now understood by a Privy-council, or a more General Council of the States, is hard to say) that he might oppress him, more securely, under the sanction of their judgment. They met accordingly, and made no scruple, to ratify the pleasure of their prince, by their wicked decisions. This decision, as *Dr. Patrick* thinks, and the title of the psalm imports, is, what *David* reproves, in the 1st verse of the lviiith psalm: *Do ye, indeed, speak righteousness, O congregation? Do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men?*

From *David's* calling them the *congregation*, it is probable, that this was a General Council of the people; and from this time, all *Saul's* attempts, and machinations against *David*, had all the warrant, and authority of a publick, national prosecution.

C H A P. X.

David flies to Samuel, to Ramah. Saul pursues him thither. What ensued thereupon. David returns to Jonathan at Gibeah, and is again obliged to fly. Their solemn Covenant, and exquisite Distress at parting.

DAVID, once more delivered, flies to *Ramah*, to *Samuel*, by whom, in all probability, he hoped to be protected, or, at least, concealed for a season.

Flying to the prophet, was flying to the more immediate protection of Almighty God; and God, in whom he confided, failed him not; for *Samuel*, to whom he related the whole train of *Saul's* treacheries, and the Divine deliverances, received, and returned with him, to his prophetick college at *Naiotb*; where he hoped to find a sanctuary for him, from the privileges, anciently, indulged to that sacred retreat, and, indeed, to all men of sacred character, (and all under their protection) where-ever civility prevailed, over the face of the earth *. But *Saul*

was

* See *Grat. de Jure Belli & Pacis*, l. 3. c. 11.

was now too far gone, in his enmity to God, and goodness, to be swayed by such considerations; for, no sooner did he learn, that *David* was at *Naioth*, but he, immediately, sent messengers to take him. They went; and when they arrived, they found the sacred assembly, under the immediate influence of the spirit of God, prophesying, and *Samuel*, presiding over them: And to convince that infidel tribe, that these prophesyings, were no fanatick delusions, or efforts of enthusiasm, they themselves were seized, with the same sacred influence, and prophesied also. And when this was told *Saul*, he sent other messengers again, and again; and they also were subdued, by the same spirit of God. At last, he went himself, enquiring, as he went on, where *Samuel*, and *David* were. And being informed at the great well of *Sechu* (where there was a great resort of persons, to draw water) that they were at *Naioth* in *Ramah*, he pressed forward in quest of them: and as he proceeded, God, to shew, that his power is neither confined to place, nor persons, that the prophesyings at *Naioth*, were owing to no influence of example, to no intoxicating vapours, or temperature of the air, (as was suspected of some of the Oracles of old) seized him also, with his sacred influence, long before he reached *Naioth*, and conducted him under it, to the assembly of the prophets; where, forgetting his bloody purpose, he put off his robes of royalty, and military apparatus, and prophesied in the presence of *Samuel*; and continued under a very distinguished influence of the spirit of God, that whole day, and night: *He lay down naked* *, (says the

* Mr. *Howell's* comment upon this passage (*Hist. of the Bible*, vol. 2. b. 5. p. 18, 19.) is well worth noticing. "The words of the original (says he) which are rendered *naked*, signify often nothing else, but to have a part of the body uncovered, as their versions translate it, 2 *Sam.* vi. 20. or to be without a gown, or upper-garment, such as the *Easterns*, and *Romans* wore.

the text) in the same sense, that *Facitus* calls the Germans naked, *Rejēta veste superiore*, when they had thrown off their upper garment; which, now, gave new occasion, to the repetition of that proverbial taunt against him, *Is Saul also among the prophets?*

Doubtless, *Saul* (with the wits, and flatterers of his court) had, in the fullness of his libertine spirit, often turned *David*, and the prophetick choir, to which he had associated himself, to abundant ridicule! and now, the ridicule is retorted upon himself: a ridicule, which (as *Erasmus* observes) is, properly, applied to any man, who is unfitly associated.

Whilst *Saul* continued, under this influence of the Holy Spirit, *David* returned from *Ramah* to *Gibeah*, where the court then resided, and where *Jonathān*, is believed to have been governor: here, he had recourse to his faithful friend, for aid, and advice, in his present exigency; here, he expostulated with him, upon the cruelty of his father's persecution,

“ wore. We need but consider, the circumstances, which *Isaiab*,
 “ and St. *John* remark, when they speak of *nakedness*, to be
 “ persuaded, that they did not mean a being altogether naked:
 “ for God commanded *Isaiab*, to put off his sackcloth, and to go
 “ barefoot, for three years; only to denote, that the *Egyptians*
 “ and *Arabians* were to be carried away captive, in the same
 “ manner, by the *Affyrians*. But it was never the custom, to strip
 “ captives, altogether naked, but only to strip them of their best
 “ cloaths, and to give them worse, and shorter, that they might
 “ be the more fit for service, as *Sanctius*, and *Grotius* have ob-
 “ served. Besides, it is not probable, that *Isaiab* could have lived,
 “ three whole years, without any cloaths to cover him. We
 “ must therefore render, that *Saul* stript himself of his upper
 “ garment, and lay almost naked on the ground. In the same
 “ sense, that *Aurelius Victor*, speaking of those, who were sent to
 “ *Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus*, to bring him to the senate, to be
 “ made dictator, says, that they found him naked, ploughing on
 “ the other side of the *Tyber*. For, it were ridiculous to imagine,
 “ that he was altogether naked. And *Titus Livius*, relating the
 “ same story, observes, that he called to his wife *Rucca* for
 “ his gown, or *toga*, that he might appear, fit to accompany
 “ them.”

persecution, and endeavoured, to find out the cause of it.

Jonathan gave him all the consolation he could ; and, probably, confiding, more than he ought, in the sincerity of *Saul's* conversion, from the late miracle wrought upon him, endeavoured, to persuade *David*, that no more mischief was meant him ; inasmuch as his father, who concealed nothing from him, had not given him, the least hint of any such intention. But this, far from assuring *David*, confirmed him the more, in the belief of some secret designs, laid against him, which were, industriously, concealed from *Jonathan*, from a persuasion, that his friendship would discover them to *David* : *And David sware* (1 Sam. xx. 3.) *moreover, and said, Thy father certainly knoweth, that I have found grace in thy eyes ; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved * : but truly, as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death.*

To this *Jonathan* replied, that he was ready to do every thing, that *David's* heart desired for his safety.

Upon this, it was agreed, that the next day, being the festival of the *New Moon*, at which time, *David's* attendance would be expected, if *Saul* should enquire for him, *Jonathan* should answer, that he had, at his earnest request, given him leave, to attend an annual, family sacrifice, then held at *Bethlehem*. If the king acquiesced in that excuse, they were to conclude, that all was well ; if not, that evil was determined against *David*.

David

* The reader will observe a singular delicacy in this expression ; the honour, *David* had for *Jonathan*, would not let him put any expression, into the mouth of his father, which would imply the least distrust of his son : and therefore, he gives it quite another turn ; as if *Saul* concealed his designs upon *David*, from *Jonathan*, only to avoid afflicting him.

David added, that in acting thus, *Jonathan* would give him a sure proof of his friendship, and inviolable adherence to that covenant, which they had mutually confirmed, by solemn oaths : but if *Jonathan* declined doing this, he then begged, that if he were conscious of any guilt in him, that deserved death, he would slay him himself ; that he might have the satisfaction of dying by the hand of his friend, and not be exposed, to the rage of his cruel father : *If there be in me iniquity, (says he) slay me thyself ; for why shouldst thou bring me to thy father ?*

This he said in the fullness of friendly affection ; as the *Japanese*, at this day, when their friends are doomed to die, slay them with their own hands, thinking it infamous, to fall by the hand of a common executioner. Though *David's* request had, I think, more of *Phædra's* wish in it, to die by the hands of that person, who was dearest to him. And *Jonathan* so understood it ; for we find, this tender expression touched him to the quick, and he, immediately, cried out, *Far be it from me !* assuring *David*, at the same time, that, far from destroying him himself, if he knew any evil designs of his father against him, he would, certainly, discover them. *David* then asked, supposing, there were such designs, and *Jonathan* should come to the knowledge of them, what method could he take of informing him ? To this *Jonathan* (having hit upon a contrivance, that would effect, what he had desired) only replied, by desiring him, to walk out into the fields with him ; and as they passed along, his generous heart, filled with all the tenderness of friendship, and touched with the appearance of his being suspected by *David*, broke out into that tender profession of his integrity, and pathetick appeal to Almighty God for it, which nothing ever yet equalled : *O Lord, God of Israel, when I have foudred my father, about to-morrow at any time, or the third day ; and behold, if there be good toward David, and I then*
send

send not unto thee, and shew it thee, the Lord do so, and much more to Jonathan : but if it please my father, to do thee evil, then I will shew it thee, and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace ; and the Lord be with thee, as he hath been with my father.

He then proceeds, in the fullness of his friendship for him, and in full assurance, that *David* would, one day, fill the throne, which God intended for him, to oblige him, once more, to ratify the covenant, which they had mutually sworn : *And thou shalt not only, while yet I live, shew me the kindness of the Lord, that I die not ; but also, thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever.*

How tender a sense had *Jonathan* of that friendship, which he thus wishes to perpetuate ! How unspeakable a generosity, to stipulate for his own life, with that man, whose life was then absolutely in his power ! interceding, that his children might not be considered as enemies to him : *Thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever ; no, not when the Lord hath cut off the enemies of David, every one, from the face of the earth : concluding all, with that remarkable, and undistinguishing imprecation, Let the Lord even require it at the hands of David's enemies.*

When *Jonathan* had thus ended the covenant on his part, he presses *David*, in a transport of tenderness, to confirm it anew ; to oblige him, once more, from the delight he took in his friendship, to give him new assurances of it ; again to bind it to him by oath : *And Jonathan caused David to swear again, (says the text) because he loved him ; for he loved him, as his own soul.* Whoever knows, what it is to love, will need no better proof of it.

They then agreed, that *David* might go down to *Bethlehem* for three days, at the end of which, he should return to his former place of concealment, near the stone of *Ezel*, and tarry there, until *Jonathan* gave him a signal, either to appear, or fly.

The

The signal agreed on was this, that *Jonathan* should, at the time appointed, walk into the field, as it were to shoot at a mark ; and when he had shot three arrows, if he called to the lad, that gathered up the arrows, to tell him, they were on this side of him, then *David* might return to court, for that should be a signal, that all was well, and no evil intended him : but if he should call to the lad, that the arrows were beyond him, then was he to fly, as fast as he could, as justly fearing the worst.

As *Jonathan* could not tell, how he might be watched, and followed into the field, so as to be precluded, from all possibility of communing with his friend, there was a necessity of their agreeing, upon some secret signal, that might be unintelligible to others : and when they had done so, *Jonathan* concludes all, with a new address to Almighty God, that he would perpetuate the covenant, established between them.

According as they had foreseen, so it fell out ; when the feast of the *New Moon* came on, *Saul*, and his company sat down to meat. And as there seems to be some allusion, to the ancient way of eating, in the account we have of it : it will not, I hope, be amiss to describe it, more particularly.

The text tells us no more than this, that *the king sat upon his seat, as at other times, even upon a seat by the wall.* From whence the learned conclude, that the table was set, after the ancient manner, in a half-circle : and *Saul*, as was meet, seated himself (for the way of reclining at meat was not yet introduced) at the middle, and most honourable part of it ; which, from the nature, of the thing, was the part next the wall.

The text adds, that *Jonathan* arose, and *Abner* sat upon *Saul's* side ; and therefore, it is probable, that *Jonathan's* rising, was to give place to his uncle. From this also it is easy to infer, that the table was semi-circular ; for otherwise *Saul's* place would have

had no distinction, since *Abner*, who sat by his side, would also have sat by the wall, as well as he.

In this situation, it was easy to see, that *David's* place, which, probably, was next to *Jonathan*, was empty ; which, tho' *Saul* well observed, he passed over in silence the first day, concluding, he was prevented by some legal pollution ; but as this feast, thro' the uncertainty of the moon's appearance, was always kept two days *, *Saul*, finding *David's* place again empty, the next day, enquired of *Jonathan*, why the son of *Jesse* was absent both that day, and the day before.

Jonathan answered, as was agreed on, that he had earnestly begged leave, to attend the family sacrifice at *Bethlehem* ; and that his brother had commanded him, in his father's name, to attend at it : and therefore, he had consented to let him go, which was the reason of his absence.

At the hearing of this, *Saul's* anger kindled into a furious rage ; which broke out into bitter reproaches upon his son, charging him at once with folly, rebellion, and perverseness. Urging, that he had chosen the son of *Jesse* to his own confusion, and the confusion of his mother's nakedness ; by this reproach aspersing his very birth, as if so degenerate a son could not be his, but the offspring of his mother's guilt, the issue of a criminal commerce with some other man ; adding, that as long as the son of *Jesse* lived, neither he, nor his kingdom should be established ; and concluding with a peremptory command, to send instantly, and fetch *David* to him, for that he should surely die.

This cruel treatment, concluding in so cruel a command, got the better of *Jonathan's* temper. Those quick questions, wherewith he replies upon
his

* The *New Moon* was proclaimed according to its appearance ; and the appearance being uncertain, sometimes in the morning, sometimes in the evening, at noon, or at midnight, therefore they observed two days in honour of it.

his father, *Wherefore shall he die?* and, *What hath he done?* sufficiently evince this. Besides, the text adds, that *he arose from the table in fierce anger.* At which *Saul*, incensed beyond all bounds, caught up a javelin, and darted it at him: which *Jonathan* (probably, upon his guard, as expecting no less) happily escaped.

If it be asked, How it came to pass, that *Saul* always had his spear in readiness, (as on this, and other occasions) to execute his evil purposes? I answer, That spears were the scepters of those ages, which the kings always carried in their hands.

That they always carried their scepters in their hands, appears from *Homer*. And that those scepters were spears, is evident from the 23d book of *Justin's History*, c. 3, where, speaking of the first age of the *Romans*, which, *Dr. Patrick* thinks, was about the age of *Saul*, he tells us, that as yet in those times, kings had spears as ensigns of royalty, which the *Greeks* called scepters. And *Pausanias*, in his *Bæoticks*, tells us, that the kings of *Argos* called their scepters spears.

The treatment, which *Jonathan* received, was a sufficient indication of what *David* was to expect; and both these, his sorrow for his friend, and shame of the indignities, he himself indured, turned that day's festival into a day of abstinence, and mortification with *Jonathan*: however, the disgrace and chagrin he was in, gave him a better pretence for retiring, and secluding himself from company, and, consequently, a better opportunity of keeping his appointment with *David* less observed. He went out into the field next morning, attended only by one lad, who carried his arrows; and when he had directed the lad towards the place, to which he aimed his arrows, as the lad hastened hither, he shot an arrow beyond him; commanding him at the same time (as the lad apprehended) to make all the dispatch he could; but, in reality, cautioning *David* to

escape, and make the best of his way ; however, finding the coast was clear, and eager to have one moment's enjoyment of his friend, he dispatched his attendant, with all the speed he could, to the city.

When the lad was gone, *David* came forth from the opposite side of the rock * ; and, oppressed at once with tenderness to his friend, gratitude to his benefactor, and veneration for his prince, he fell on his face, and bowed himself three times to the earth before him : they then fell into one another's arms, embraced, and wept over each other, with a distress that is not to be described, until *David* exceeded.

It is justly observed, that the noblest minds are, like the noblest metals, easily melted ; and the ancients, with good reason, made this one mark of true generosity. From hence those poetick, became also proverbial expressions, Ἀγαστοὶ δ' ἀπιδανύουσιν ἄνδρες. † *Et faciles motus mens generosa capit.* ||

Commentators account for the excess of *David's* distress, on this occasion, from the lamentable prospect of his exile from his family, from his friends, and, it may be, from the people of God. But we should remember, that commentators are not always the best judges of true heroism. *David*, I am persuaded, had a heart, too brave to be sunk by such selfish considerations.

If the generous reader will allow himself, to determine this point, from the sentiments of his own breast, I dare believe, he will not hesitate one moment to pronounce, that it was the sense, not of his own distress, but of *Jonathan's* generosity, that overwhelmed *David*. He was now leaving, perhaps
taking

* *Jonathan* discharged his arrows on the North-side of the rock ; and the text tells us, that *David* arose out of the South : he avoided shooting on the side *David* lay, for fear of a discovery.

† The Good are quickly melted into tears.

|| The generous Mind is easy to be moved.

taking his last leave, of that man, who, though he knew, *David* stood between him, and a throne, yet had often saved his life, and was now just come from saving it again, at the imminent hazard of his own !

And how was he leaving this invaluable friend ? He was leaving him to the rage of a furious, incensed father, who would not fail to destroy him, for the very kindness, he was then shewing to *David*, if ever it should come to his knowledge.

Where is the heart that could be insensible ? Where is the heart, that must not sink under this distress ? *Jonathan* was too delicate, and too generous, not to see all the movements of *David's* heart on this distressful occasion ; and seeing them, he repressed his own grief, for fear of sinking his friend too much, by excess of tenderness ! This made him conclude the conference in that religious, and calm manner, recorded in the text (1 Sam. xx. 42.) : *And Jonathan said unto David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn, both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be between me, and thee, and between my seed, and thy seed for ever.* This said, *David* arose, broke away from his friend, and went into exile, and *Jonathan* returned to the city.

Then was it, in all probability, that this wandering exile brake out into this, and the following complaints (psal. xvii.) : *Hear the right, O Lord, consider my complaint, and hearken unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips. Let my sentence come forth from thy presence, and let thine eyes look upon the thing that is equal.—O hold thou up my goings, that my footsteps slip not, &c.*



C H A P. XI.

David flies to Abimelech at Nob : His Conduct there examined, and excused. From Nob he flies to Achish at Gath : His Conduct there examined, and accounted for.

BEFORE we follow *David* into exile, it will not be amiss to inform my readers, of less learning, that the *Romans* also had feasts not unlike the *New-moon* feasts of the *Jews*, (mentioned in the last chapter) called *Charistia*, or *Feasts of Love*, to which none, but their kindred were invited * ; a festivity which, in all probability, they borrowed from the *Jews*.

David, in his first flight from *Saul*, had recourse to the prophet of God ; and now his next is to his priest : he came to *Nob*, a city of *Benjamin*, not far from *Jerusalem*, to *Abimelech*, otherwise called *Abiathar*, the high-priest ; and there, in all probability, he hoped, to be sheltered for a season ; there was the altar, and the tabernacle ; and there also he, probably, said to himself, *Under the shadow of thy wings shall be my refuge, until this tyranny be over-past*. And, possibly, so it might have been, had he not been prevented by the sight of *Doeg*, the *Edomite*, one of the servants of *Saul*, and chief of his Herdsmen, who being detained there that day, either because it was the Sabbath, or by reason of some vow, or other religious regard, *David* well knew, would make a merit to *Saul* of discovering his retreat. And, in all probability, the high-priest himself suspected as much ; for the text tells us, that *he was afraid* at the meeting of *David*, for which there had, otherwise, been no cause. Then *Abimelech* inquired why he was alone,

* Val. Max. l. II. c. I.

Ovid. Fast.—*Proxima cognati dixerunt charistia cbaris,
Et venit ad socios turba propinqua decem.*

alone, and not attended, as became his dignity? To which he answered, that he was employed by the king upon an affair, which required secrecy, and dispatch; and therefore, he came away, in that private, manner, and appointed his servants where to meet him.

Here *David* is charged, by most commentators, with the guilt of adding one lye to another; a falsification, which, in its consequence, cost the priests of God their lives. And it is thought, that in compunction for this guilt, he utters that lamentable complaint, in the cxixth psalm, at the 28th and 29th verses, *My soul melteth away for very heaviness:—Take from me the way of lying.*

All men, however, do not see this matter in the same light; there are some, who cannot bring themselves to believe, that any reflection upon this part of his conduct, lay heavy upon *David*, because they cannot charge him in this matter, as others do. His intention was innocent: he industriously concealed his condition from the high-priest, to keep him clear of all suspicion, and charge of having combined with him against *Saul*.

I find many learned men, who honour truth, as much as any of its advocates, and yet will not load every uninjuring, undesigning, and much less every well-designing deceit, with the guilt of lying. They cannot, indeed, go in altogether with *Euripides*, who is of opinion, that when truth is likely to be attended with great evil, falsehood is pardonable*; well knowing, that a good man should speak the truth from his heart in many instances, even to his own greatest damage, or disadvantage. All that they insist on is, that we are not obliged to speak the truth, either to our own, or other men's disadvantage, to such, as have no right to know it from us; and,

F 4

consequently,

* Ὅτι δ' ἀναθρον δεικνὺν ἡ ἀλήθεια ἄγει,
 Σοφιστῶν εἰπεῖν ἐστὶ, καὶ τὸ μὴ, καλόν.

consequently, are no way injured by not knowing it. He is a good man, (saith *Cicero*, 3 *Offic.*) who does all the good he can to others, and injures no one, unless grievously provoked. To dissemble, or disguise the truth, from one, who hath no right to know it, is no injury: consequently, such a conduct, is consistent with the character of a good man

I know no imputation of guilt upon this conduct in the scriptures. The best writers upon the law of nature censure it not. And I should be glad to know, from those rigid gentlemen, who differ from these learned writers, how children, fools, mad-men, and ruffians are to be treated upon their principles. The cases are obvious.

When *David* had excused his coming thus unattended, as well as he could, to the high-priest, he begged such a supply of provisions from him, as he could spare. The high-priest answered, That he had no common bread; and made some difficulty of supplying him with that, which had been hallowed the day before, lest his servants might be under some legal pollution, especially, with regard to women*. But this was removed, by *David's* assuring him, that they were under no legal pollution; and that the *shew-bread* of the day before, was now, in a manner, become common, since there was other bread, this day, sanctified in the vessel.

Then *David* applied to him for some sword, or spear, or other arms, as having left his own behind him, through the haste, which the king's business required. To which the priest answered, *The sword of Goliab, the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the valley of Elab, behold, it is here, wrapt in a cloth behind the ephod; if thou wilt take that, take it; for there is no other, save that here. And David said, There is none like that, give it me.*

Before

* Here we see, that some degree of purification, at least non-pollution, was required, to fit the people for eating the *shew-bread*, How much more the sacramental!

Before *David* departed, he prevailed upon the high-priest, to enquire of God concerning him; but what answer he received, or whether he obeyed the divine direction, or monition, is not said. It is certain, he, sometimes, governed himself by other measures; and it is as certain, he, always, had reason to repent his doing so, as most certainly he did, at this time.

The resolution he took, was, to throw himself under the protection of *Achish*, the *Philistine* king; and he did so accordingly, with *Goliath's* sword by his side.

It is not easy to pronounce upon this conduct; and I shall take no more upon me, than to observe, what is obvious to every reader, that it was not inspired, by the dictates of common prudence. Some imagine, that he meant to conceal himself at that court, and only made use of the privileges, anciently indulged to strangers, of sojourning for a season, where-ever they thought fit, without having any questions asked them. But, surely, had this been his view, he never would have sojourned there, with such a mark of distinction as *Goliath's* sword. Besides, there is no doubt, but that his name, and person were now become as dreadful to the *Philistines*, as ever that of *Scanderbeg* was after to the *Turks*. Nay, it should seem, that they had, by this time, been acquainted, even with his designation to the crown; for so the servants of *Achish* plainly intimate, in their informations to their master: *Is not this* (say they) *David, the king of the land? Did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?*

I have no doubt, but that *David* frankly, and openly owned, from the beginning who he was, and threw himself upon the king's mercy for protection. But when they acquainted their master, that he was king-elect of the realm of *Israel*, they insinuated this as a reason, why he should not be trusted: or, possibly,

sibly, they alluded to the condition, stipulated in the combat with *Goliath*, that the people of the conquered champion, should serve those of the conqueror: so that if *David* was king of *Judea*, he would consider himself, as king of *Palestine* also.

This conduct of the courtiers startled *David*; he then saw into what streights, he had brought himself, and had no way of escaping, but by changing his behaviour, and counterfeiting madness. The text tells us, *David was sore afraid of Achish, and he changed his behaviour before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands*; well knowing, that mad-men are rather objects of pity, than of punishment; and played his part so well, that he, effectually, deceived them. The king, it seems, was not of a humour either to be entertained with men of that character, or even to endure them, and so ordered him to be turned out of his court. In memory of which great deliverance, he is said to have composed the 17th psalm: which is an earnest application to God, and a thankful recognition of his infinite goodness, in saving, and protecting him from his enemies.

It is, besides this, a key that lets us into the true secret of *David's* conduct, upon this occasion.

From this psalm it plainly appears, that the courtiers of *Gath* were bent upon *David's* destruction; and daily caballed against him: they soon perceived him to be a great genius; a character not always honoured as it ought, even in a friend, but always dreaded, if not hated, in an enemy, and they resolved his ruin; and to be sure to effect it, they misconstrued, and gave wrong turns to every thing, he said, or did: ver. 5. *Every day (says he) they wrest my words; all their thoughts are against me for evil; they gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps, when they lay wait for my soul.*

What should he do? he had dealt with them, in the integrity, and simplicity of his heart; but his honesty was interpreted into guile. To labour to set himself

himself right with them were in vain, for they designedly misinterpreted every thing; and to enter into any debate with them upon it, would be but to discover his distrust, and insure his destruction. Fair open dealing would not do. What if he tried to deceive? To deceive the deceiver, is, in many instances, meritorious, in none, criminal. And what so likely to deceive, as the very reverse of that character, which they had so misconstrued? He was undone as a wise man; he had a chance to escape, as a mad-man; he tried, and the experiment succeeded.

Some criticks have indulged themselves, in vilifying, and traducing *David* upon this account; but others, with more reason, consider this conduct, as a strong specimen of sagacity, and penetration, and as a well judged, an honest, and an honourable fraud! and can no more censure *David*, for saving his life by this guile, than they can *Solon*, for serving his country.

If any man object to this way of reasoning from the *Psalms*, I beseech him to reflect, how unreasonable it would be to suppose, that a hymn written upon a particular occasion, should yet contain nothing in it, any way relating to that occasion: And on the other hand, if those hymns contain particularities not arising from the general nature of prayer, or thanksgiving, whether we must not, by all the rules of rational interpretation, refer those particularities to the occasion, upon which the hymn was composed? And if we have a right to do this, surely, we have a right to reason from them.

C H A P. XII.

David *flies to the Cave of Adullam. Some Account of the Persons, who resorted to him there.*

DAVID's next refuge was the cave of *Adullam*, in the tribe of *Judab*, and to the east of *Eleutheropolis* *, a place fortified by nature, and so fitted for the security of persons in distress, that we are told, it hath, frequently, given a refuge from the *Turks* to the *Christians*, who fled thither with their families, flocks, and herds.

Hither, his friends, those, especially, of his own family, who had reason to apprehend, that they should be involved in the imputation of his guilt, resorted to him. Hither also, as it is generally understood, came those valiant men, and great captains of the tribe of *Gad*, who are said, in 1 *Cbron.* ch. xii. to have separated themselves unto David into the bold in the wilderness, men of might, men of war, fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were like the faces of lions; and they were swift, as the roes upon the mountains.

These men had all the natural, and acquired advantages, that could, best distinguish soldiers; they were brave, strong, and swift, with such a fierceness of aspect, as terrified their enemies. *Aristotle* observes, that lions resemble men more in their countenances, than any other animals; and as lions are the fiercest, and noblest of the inferior animals, the ancients thought it no mean commendation, in men of war to resemble them.

The chief of these *Gadites* were captains, (whether of *Saul's* army then, or of *David's* afterwards, is not clear) some of thousands, and the least of hundreds.

The

* *Eusebius* gives this situation to a town of that name extant in his time. This was, probably, the country of *Hirab*, *Judab's* associate, *Gen.* xxii.

The sacred text observes of these, as a further indication of their courage, that they ventured over *Jordan*, in the most dangerous season, (probably, swam over it) when the river was deepest, and most rapid, which was in the first month, the season of the barley-harvest; for now the snows from the neighbouring mountains (*Lebanon* especially) began to melt, and swelled the river above its banks.

When they had conquered the river, they yet had other enemies to encounter, who are called, in the *English* translation, *men of the valleys*; these also they conquered, *They put the valleys to flight* (says the text) *to the east, and to the west.*

After these came a mixed company of the tribes of *Judab*, and *Benjamin*, in a considerable body. *David* went out to meet them, and seeing so many of *Saul's* tribe, and probably some of his kindred, he apprehended there might be some treachery intended him. He was far from a suspicious spirit; yet it behoved him to be upon his guard; however, much must be ventured, if he meant to be secured from *Saul*. At worst, he could but die; and, to a brave man, death is far better than a mean distrust. He told them, in all the heroick simplicity, and with all the frankness, of a generous spirit, that if they came with friendly intentions towards him, they should meet with faithful returns of affection, and friendship from him; but if they came to betray an innocent man to his enemies, he referred the vengeance of such guilt to God: *If (says he) ye be come peaceably unto me, to help me, my heart shall be knit unto you; but if ye be come to betray me unto mine enemies, seeing there is no wrong in my hands, the God of our fathers look down thereon, and rebuke it*.*

Then *Amasai*, chief of these great leaders, struck with the openness, and dignity of this conduct, and
inspired

* The conciseness of the original hath, I think, great dignity & *look*, and *rebuke*.

inspired with a noble zeal, for the cause of so brave, and so injured a man, replied at once, with a spirit, which, nothing, but the original, can express in its more than *Laconick* strength, and brevity ; *Thine, David, and with thee, thou son of Jesse*† : *Peace, Peace to thee, and peace to thy helpers ; for thy God helpeth thee.*

Then *David* received them, and made *them* captains of the host.

The candid, and learned reader will best judge for himself, whether he hath ever observed, in all the accounts of antiquity, so heroick an address, and so soldierly a reply.

This is the account left us of those great men, who resorted to *David* at *Adullam* : and with these, as it was natural, mixed themselves all such, as were discontented, in debt, and in distress, to the number of about four hundred men in all, and he became their captain.

Probably, that usage now prevailed among the *Jews*, which *Cesar* tells us, anciently obtained among the *Gauls*, for those that were in debt, oppressed by tributes, or the tyranny of the great, to betake themselves to the service of some eminent man, for protection ; by him they were maintained, and to him they devoted themselves, under a solemn obligation to live, and die with him. These were called, in the *Gotbick* language, *Soldurii* ; which must be owned to be a very honourable original of the word *Soldier*. It is evident, that such might be very honest, and good men ; and such, in all probability, were *David's* companions.

Here it is asked, How *David* could, in conscience, protect those men from their creditors ? To this it is obvious to answer ; That to rescue unhappy men, who are not able to pay their debts, from the tyranny

† The meaning of that expression I take to be this ; Notwithstanding they reproach thy birth, and taunt thee with the appellation of the son of *Jesse*, we are thine.—

ny of cruel creditors, is one of the greatest acts of humanity, and mercy ; and the distress these were in, (sufficiently seen in their recourse to *David*, then in the extremity of distress) shews their inability to satisfy theirs. But though they were now unable to satisfy their creditors, their circumstances were in some time considerably mended ; and, very probably, when *David* was enabled, in some measure, to pay his debts of gratitude, they were in a condition to clear off their debts of justice ; so that both debtors, and creditors were, in all probability, benefitted by the refuge, which *David* now afforded.

That good men have often had the misfortune to be in debt, and many ways oppressed, the histories of all countries assure us.

Whether these were good men, when they resorted to *David*, is not easy to say : but if they were not, that they became so, by his discipline, influence, and example, is sufficiently evident, from their subsequent behaviour ; and makes it credible, that it was chiefly for their use, he composed the xxxivth psalm, which contains the noblest encouragements to piety, and virtue, from an assurance, that all such, as are so devoted, are the immediate care of Almighty God ; as all those, of a contrary character, are his abhorrence, and the sure marks of his vengeance. And surely this psalm, considered in this light, is one of the noblest, the best-turned, and best-judged, and best-adapted compositions, that ever was penned *.

Whether

* He begins by encouraging them to piety, and gratitude to God, from his own example : *I will alway give thanks unto the Lord : his praise shall ever be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord : the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. O praise the Lord with me : and let us magnify his name together. I sought the Lord, and he heard me : yea, he delivered me out of all my fear. They had an eye unto him, and were enlightned : and their faces were not ashamed. Lo, the poor crieth, and the Lord heareth him : yea, and saveth him out of all his troubles. The*
angel

Whether Mr. Bayle be sufficiently justified, in calling this company, *a troop of Banditti*, (that is ruffians, robbers, and murderers) and considering them in the same light, with the associates of *Catiline*, the candid reader will judge for himself.

In this situation, *David's* first care was, to place his father, and his mother in safety, under the protection of the king of *Moab*, the chief of those princes, which were at enmity with *Saul*; which he had the more reason to hope for, as being descended from *Ruth*, a woman of that nation, and supposed of the royal family.

The king's residence was at *Mizpeh*, a strong fortress, where *David's* parents continued all the time, he was in the hold.

His

angel of the Lord tarrieth round about them, that fear him, and delivereth them. He then exhorts others to make trial of the same mercies; to learn the goodness of God, from their own experience. *O taste and see how gracious the Lord is: blessed is the man that trusteth in him. O fear the Lord, ye that are his saints: for they that fear him lack nothing.* He then assures them, that strength, and magnanimity are no securities from want, and distress; whereas trust, and confidence in God, is a never-failing source of every thing that is good: *The lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they who seek the Lord, shall want no manner of thing that is good.* After which, he sums up all, in a most pathetic, and beautiful exhortation to virtue, and to confidence in God; in full assurance, that as he was the guardian, and true protector of virtue in distress, so was he the unerring observer, and steady avenger of wickedness: *Come, ye children, and hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord. What man is he that desireth to live, and would fain see good days? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips that they speak no guile. Eschew evil, and do good: seek peace, and ensue it. The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers. The countenance of the Lord is against them that do evil: to root out the remembrance of them from the earth. The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth them: and delivereth them out of all their troubles. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart: and will save such as be of an humble spirit. Great are the troubles of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of all. He keepeth all his bones; so that not one of them is broken. But misfortune shall slay the ungodly: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate. The Lord delivereth the souls of his servants: and all they, that put their trust in him, shall not be destitute.*

His address to the king on this occasion, his resignation, and his dependence upon GOD, are all very remarkable: *And he said unto the king, let my father, and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, and be with you, until I know what God will do for me.* He could not bear, that his aged parents should be tied to a cold cave, and a perilous confinement, exposed to all the hardships of a siege, to dearths, to damps, and dangers of various kinds; and, therefore, he begs leave of the king, to take them from thence, and place them under his protection. To say the truth, it were hard to determine, which was most conspicuous, his piety to GOD, or to his parents, on this occasion.

The king received them graciously, and honourably, and lodged them in some of the apartments of his court; for this seems plainly implied, where the text tells us, that he *brought them before the king of Moab*, (that is, into his presence) *and they dwelt with him all the while, that David was in the hold.*

C H A P. XIII.

David flies to the Forest of Hareth: His Employment there. Saul's Impatience for Revenge finely painted in the Text. The Priests at Nob massacred.

HOW long David continued after this in the cave of *Adullam*, is not said. We only know, that he left it, upon the monition of the prophet *Gad*, whom GOD seems to have raised up at this time, on purpose for his support: *Abide not in the hold* (said the prophet to him), *Depart, and get thee into the land of Judah.* GOD had other works, and other trials to exercise him in, and, therefore, he would suffer him to lie no longer buried in a cave. Then *David* departed, and went into the forest of *Hareth*.

Of this forest, *Rabbi Solomon* says, (I presume, upon the credit of ancient tradition) that being

before dry, barren, and impassable, it now became fruitful, and irriguous ; and that *David* alludes to this in the xxiii^d psalm, where he considers God, as his *Shepherd*, who would, in his own time, lead him into fruitful pastures : and till then, he was safe, under his protection, in the most dangerous scenes *.

When he calls God his *Shepherd*, he plainly implies, that he followed, wherever it pleased God to guide him ; alluding to the practice of the *Asiatick* shepherds, who do not drive, but lead their flocks ; which are trained to follow them, as *David* evidently did the guidance of God at this time.

This, I think, is the most rational comment, transmitted to us by the *Rabbins*.

And, surely, it is not impossible, but that this, which was before a barren desert, might now, by a singular blessing from God, upon the industry of *David*, and his companions, become a green pasture. This conduct, and, in all probability, alluding to this very time, he himself numbers among those wonders, which God doth for the children of men, *psal. cvii.* that *he maketh water-springs of a dry ground, and there he setteth the hungry, that they may build them a city to dwell in : that they may sow their land, and plant vineyards, to yield them fruits of increase. He blesteth them, so that they multiply exceedingly, and suffereth not their cattle to decrease. And again : When they are minished, and brought low through oppression, &c. though he suffer them to be evil intreated through tyrants, (pouring neglect upon princes) and let them wander in a wayless wilderness ; yet helpeth he the poor out of misery, and maketh him households like a flock of sheep.*

This

* *He shall feed me in a green pasture, and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort,——Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.*

This is a plain description of his own case, and such as can suit no other *; and it is all spoken, in the style of an experienced man. And, indeed, if this were not so evident, from the nature of the thing, his manner of introducing this reflection, sufficiently shews, that it related to himself. He observes, that God *maketh a fruitful land barren, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.*—Again he says: *He maketh the wilderness a standing water, &c.* The nature of the antitheses plainly shews, that as God, *for the sins of men, makes a fruitful land barren*; so, for their piety, and righteousness, he turns barrenness into culture. But the case being, notoriously, his own, he carefully forbore the least hint of piety, or righteousness, lest he should be thought to vaunt his own merits. And as to his ascribing all this to the agency of God, no man, that considers the piety of his style, will, for that reason, think it necessary, to preclude the interposition of second causes, or human agency.

Idleness, with regard to honest industry, is ordinarily the effect of vicious habits; and, therefore, it is no wonder, if *Canaan* was, from the days of its ancient inhabitants, in the condition of the sluggard's vineyard, over-run with thorns, and thistles; especially, considering the desolations, consequent to the ensuing, and almost incessant wars.

The *Canaanites*, who inhabited this land, before the days of *Joshua*, were, without doubt, the wickedest, the most abandoned race of mortals, upon the face of the earth! And, I believe, it will be allowed, that all mankind are idle, and negligent of culture, in proportion to their wickedness. Industry, and the honest arts of life, have a

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natural

* If this opinion needed any support, we might derive a probable confirmation of it, from what *Eusebius* tells us, that in his time, there was, in the forest of *Arith*, a village called *Arath*, to the West of *Ælia*, (so *Jerusalem* was then called) in which, says he, *David* resided.

natural force to abate, and restrain the unruly appetites, and evil tendencies of the mind ; whereas idleness lets them all loose, and indulges their excesses.

Now, idleness, in this view, (and, indeed, in every view) is great guilt ; and we know, that briars, and thorns are, in a great measure, the fruits of God's original curse upon guilt : and, therefore, God may, with great propriety, be said to make a *fruitful land barren, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.*

On the other hand, industry (I mean, in things honest) is virtue ; and the means appointed by God himself, if not, in some measure, to expiate the original guilt of man, at least to check its progress. And, therefore, when by this industry, exerted in hope, and in an humble dependence upon God, for a blessing upon it, a barren land is made fruitful ; God, without whose influence no industry can avail, may, in the style of a man truly religious, very properly be said to do all this ; because the means are of his appointment, and the end the effect of his influence.

This reasoning best accounts both for this psalm, and for that vast number of wilds, and forests, which protected *David*, in the days of *Saul* ; and at the same time, makes it credible, that a man of so active, so improving, and so generous a spirit, as *David* was, who chose (as all wise men would) to live independant, and would not suffer his men to injure his neighbours, nor allow them in wickedness *, took this occasion to employ them in culture, and subsist them by it, and took pleasure in the employment.

How dreadful these forests were, when *David* entered into them, may easily be imagined ; at least, may well be collected from the 4th verse of the

xxiii^d psalm :

* See *Psal. ci. I will not know a wicked person, &c.*

xxiii^d psalm : Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil : for thou art with me, thy rod, and thy staff comfort me. What noble painting is this ! For, surely, the valley of such a forest, with all its gloomy horrors, inhabited only by bears, and lions, and tygers, (whose dens are in the deepest shades) is, with infinite beauty, styled, *The valley of the shadow of death.*

The necessity, that *David* lay under, of flying into this forest, laid him also under a necessity of cultivating it, as well as he could, for subsistence, and likewise of destroying the savages, that infested it. And this great benefaction to the whole neighbourhood, did, in some measure, open him the way to empire, as it did to *Nimrod*.

How providentially advantageous to *David* was this persecution, at the same time that it appeared so grievous ! To drive him from place to place, and from tribe to tribe ; What was it, but to exhibit him more extensively beneficent to them all ! What was it, but to render his patience, his piety, his temperance, his fortitude, more conspicuous ! and, by that means, to open him the way to empire ! What was it, but more effectually to exhibit him, in this respect, a true type of that blessed Being, *who went about doing good ?*

How other men may think, I cannot say ; but to minds, early habituated to rural amusements, the culture of a desert, conquering difficulties, reclaiming nature, bettering, and beautifying the scene, we are placed in, seems to have something in it infinitely agreeable, to a spirit truly heroic, and beneficent.

I might add too, something not unpleasing to that great Artificer, who formed a world of such amazing, and exquisite beauty, and contrivance, from *chaos*. Nor have I often been better pleased, than with the reflexion of a plain man, upon the improvements of a gentleman in his neighbour-

hood; he told him, *He believed, that work was very agreeable to G O D: And being asked why? he answered, It was adorning his creation.*

That spirit of culture, which now employed *David*, in reclaiming a desert, is, in truth, the same, which in other heroes exerted itself, in works of more magnificence; building cities, bridges, and aqueducts, cutting canals, and carrying ways through impassable mountains, and morasses. Beneficence sways in both: but with this difference, that vanity is too much tempted, to predominate in the one; and nothing, but conscious virtue, and secret, humble satisfaction, in the other.

This, at least, will be allowed; that as the greatest heroes have always been careful, to find full employment for their armies; such a culture, as we now speak of, and, as I think, may be clearly inferred from the fore-cited psalm, was the best way to employ, to support, and to preserve such a number of men, as *David* then had, in health, and innocence. Would to God, that great numbers of men, otherwise useless, and vicious, were always so employed, and so supported!

Nor were these *David's* only advantages, in those savage recesses. A thinking man finds something in every scene, to enlarge his mind; and a good man, to improve his piety. That *David* derived both these advantages, from his sojourning among wilds, and forests, is well seen from many of his psalms; particularly the civth, where, after some general observations upon the works, and wisdom of God in the creation, he descends to the following particulars; the rise of springs, the course of rivers, the retreats of fowls, and wild beasts of the forests, and mountains; the vicissitudes of night, and day, and their various uses to the animal world; the dependance of the whole creation upon the Almighty, for being, and subsistence! He withdraws their breath, and they die; he breathes, and they re-
vive;

vive ; he but opens his hand, and he feeds, he satisfies them all at once. These are ideas familiar to him : and his manner of introducing them, plainly shews them, the effect of his most retired meditations, in his solitary wanderings.

None, but one, who had himself surveyed the venerable shades, and stupendous size of the cedars of *Libanus*, could entertain those exalted conceptions of them, which *David* here does, (and *Dr. Huntington* also, with eyes, and hands lifted up to heaven, did in the last century) that they were planted by the hand of God *. None, but one who had himself been refuged, in the *bills of the wild goats*, could so well, and so familiarly contemplate upon the ends of the Divine Wisdom, in forming those solitary sanctuaries.

It were endless to enumerate particulars ; and I shall only beg leave to add, that none, but one, well acquainted with the fierce inhabitants of the forest, their roving, and roarings, could so describe them, as *David* doth in the 20th, 21st, and 22d verses of this psalm : *Thou makest darkness, that it may be night, wherein all the beasts of the forests do move. The lions, roaring after their prey, do seek their meat from God. The sun ariseth, and they get them away together, and lay them down in their dens.*

The time of *David's* continuance in this forest, is no-where told us : but from the time, necessarily, taken up in the culture of it, and from the bitterness of *Saul's* complaint, to his servants, and soldiers, that were about him, that none of them gave him any information, of the combination of his son, and his slave against him, the space must have been pretty considerable. It being evident that he had no intelligence of *David's* motions, at the time of his complaint : he seems to have known nothing of him, more than his being in exile, somewhere

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in

* *The cedars of Libanus, which thou hast planted.*

in the country ; nay, not so much, as his having gotten a body of men about him.

David, doubtless, must have been well beloved by a people, to whom he was so great a benefactor ; and, as such, he was well concealed : and, besides this, his intelligence was so good, that if any were inclined, yet few would dare to discover him. At last, news was brought to *Saul*, that *David* was certainly known, to have a number of armed men about him.

It should seem, from the text, that he had long, impatiently, waited for this information ; and, in the mean time, had all things in a readiness, to pursue his vengeance, at a moment's warning. And, surely, his situation in these circumstances, is finely painted in the text : *Now Saul abode in Gibeab, under a tree in Ramah, having his spear in his hand, and all his servants standing about him.*

I think it evident from hence, that he had left his house, and *resided*, or *dwelt*, (for so the *Hebrew* word signifies) in the open air, with a flying camp of chosen men about him, intent upon pursuing *David* ; as *Mithridates* was upon his game, who (as we are told) was so keen a huntsman, that he never slept under the roof of a house, for seven years together *.

Saul was now as eagerly bent upon vengeance, as *Mithridates* was (or, at least, appeared to be) upon pleasure ; and, with this view, had fixed himself upon an eminence, that gave him a prospect of the country far and wide ; always in a readiness to rush down upon *David*, where-ever he should hear he was. I own, in this situation, he gives me the idea of an eagle, that rises, as high as he can in the air, to see, and to dart down, to more advantage, upon his prey. And I submit it to the reader, whether *David* also did

* *Justin*. l. 37. c. 2.

did not consider *Saul*, in that light, when he considers himself, *as a partridge upon the mountains.*

How finely hath *Solomon* described that malignant spirit, which now reigned in this unhappy prince! *They sleep not, except they have done mischief, and their sleep is taken away, unless they have made some to fall.*

As soon as *Saul* had received the intelligence of *David's* being in arms, and joined by such considerable men of the several tribes, his guilt gave him the alarm! He knew *Jonathan's* friendship for *David*, and immediately concluded, that he must be in combination against him; nay, more, that the conspiracy was general; that even his own tribe, and his own servants were joined in it: upon which occasion, he thus addressed himself to them (1 Sam. xxii. 7, 8.): *Hear now, ye Benjamites; Will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields, and vineyards, and make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds; that all of you have conspired against me, and there is none that sheweth me, that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse; and there is none of you, that is sorry for me, or sheweth unto me, that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?*

This complaint consists of several parts: and were it just, as it was grievous, *Saul* were, indeed, to be lamented; to be betrayed by his own servants, and his own tribe, in favour of a fellow-servant, and of another tribe! to be betrayed by his son, in favour of his slave; nay, to have that slave excited against him by his son! this were, indeed, a pitiable calamity! But the truth is, *Saul* had no grounds for this suspicion, but the consciousness of his having deserved, what he dreaded.

He then proceeds in the true spirit of a tyrant, to brand *David's* arming in his own necessary defence, with the character of treachery, and lying in wait for his master: such is the treachery of the lamb, that flies from the wolf's pursuit, to the protection of his keeper, or the traveller, that resists
the

the robber. And yet, false, and fallacious as this complaint was, it found an abettor. What tyrant ever wanted more than one abettor of his iniquity?

The *Benjamites*, indeed, could neither accuse *Jonathan*, nor themselves; they knew their own innocence, and they had no reason to suspect his: there was no such combination between him, and *David*; or if there were, they could not be conscious to it: but *Doeg*, the *Edomite*, (chief of *Saul's* herdsmen) now found a fair occasion, to accuse another person, not less innocent.

He had, it seems, been detained at the tabernacle, (upon some pretence of piety) when *David* resorted to *Abimelech*, the high-priest, for relief in distress. And though *Doeg* well knew, *Abimelech* acted in that whole matter with integrity, and without the least guile, or evil intentions to *Saul*; yet he well knew, at the same time, that he should pay his court to advantage, by accusing him; and, therefore, concealing every circumstance of truth, that could acquit the high-priest of treachery, he openly accuses him of aiding, and abetting the king's enemy, supplying him with victuals, and a sword, and consulting God for him! *I saw the son of Jesse* (said he) *coming to Nob, to Abimelech, the son of Abitub; and he enquired of the Lord for him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath, the Philistine.*

Here it is observable, that as *David* now became a name of honour, from the owner's distinguished merit; for *his name* (as the text tells us) *was much set by**, (like that of *Cæsar*, or *Alexander* in after-ages) and carried dignity in the sound, *Saul* could not bear to pronounce it; but chose rather to change it, for the appellation of *the son of Jesse*, whose name, being that of an obscure, mean man, carried rather, as he imagined, the ideas of reproach, and indignity. And now *Doeg* (not the worse courtier, for being
a very

* 1 Sam. xviii. 30.

a very bad man) easily fell into the imitation, and echo of his master's phrase.

No sooner had *Doeg* ended his accusation, but immediately *Abimelech*, and all his associates, to the number of eighty-five persons, are summoned to court, and charged (as we now phrase it) with treason, for abetting, assisting, and protecting the king's enemy, and (as he called it) for conspiring against him. How uniform is the conduct of tyrants! This, *Tacitus* tells us, was, in his time, the only accusation of all those, who were clear of all guilt *.

The high-priest answered to the charge, in the simplicity of his heart, That he had, indeed, aided *David*, the king's son-in-law †, and consulted God for him, and thought his distinguished merits, and fidelity to the king, sufficiently justified him in doing so; and that he had done nothing now, but what he had done before, without the least charge, or suspicion of guilt; nay, in truth, it was what he was bound to do for the king's service, and what it would be treasonable to decline.

The answer was just, and true, and *Saul* knew it to be so; but, however, it was expedient (as *Saul's* circumstances then stood) that there should be a plot. A plot, defeated at a dangerous juncture, is a new confirmation of power! Perhaps too, it was expedient, that a priest should be in it, or, it may be, the whole order, that the whole order should be humbled, whose endowments might be dreaded, and possessions envied, and whose forfeitures might turn to good account. And, therefore, without any more trial, or eviction, *Abimelech*, and all his brethren are consigned

* *Unicum crimen eorum, qui omni crimine vacabant.*

† This was such a defence as *M. Terentius* makes for his friendship to *Sejanus*. *Tacit*, *Annal*. l. 6. *Non enim Sejanum Vulsiniensem, sed Claudiae & Juliae domus partem, quas affinitate occupaverat: Tuum, Cæsar, generum, tui consulis socium, tua officia in republica capeffentem, colebamus.*

consigned to the sword. A fatality, which hath, from that day to this, attended the priests of God, to be all involved, more or less, however innocent, in the guilt (whether real, or imputed) of every one of their order.

Whether *Saul* learned this cruelty from the *Persians* (of punishing every one of the family, for the supposed guilt of one) or taught it to them, I cannot say. This only we know, that the practice was no way authorized, or countenanced, by the *Jewish* constitution, or policy, as it was by the *Persian*, and as it is, at this day, by that of *Japan*.

But *Saul's* cruelty did not stop here. Not content to extirpate all the priests of *Nob* at once, (one only excepted, who escaped, we know not how) he smote the whole city with the edge of the sword, both men, and women, (saith the text) children, and sucklings, and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with the edge of the sword. And I doubt not, but one reason of this indiscriminate cruelty was, that not one of the priests should escape.

This man, who was, some time before, so delicate in point of piety, as to decline extirpating the sinners, the *Amalekites*, and destroying their cattle, even at the express command of God, without reserving something for sacrifice; now made thorough destruction: nor could less than an entire carnage content him. He, that before spared the murderous *Agag*, the enemy of God, now massacres the innocent *Abimelech*, and the rest of his priests, without remorse! And when his men of war refused, to be employed in so base a butchery *, *Doeg*, his informer, (taking

* In this (says *Le Clerc*) doubtless they were praise worthy; but had been more so, had they dissuaded, and remonstrated against this cruelty, as contrary to all the laws of God, and man! And if their reasons, and prayers proved ineffectual, they should have treated this command, as the dictate of *Saul's* melancholy, and removed these innocent men out of his way, until he came to himself, and not left their fellow-subjects a prey to these alien guards, the usual ministers of tyranny.

(taking to him, says Josephus, some assistants as wicked as himself) became his executioner.

Kings (says the learned Dr. Patrick) never want some to execute their commands, though never so bloody. Saul was little better than a madman, and yet had those at his beck, that would do as he bid them. It was excellently, therefore, said by Justin Martyr, *Let us pray, that kings, and rulers, together with a royal power, may be found having a sober mind.*

And here I cannot but observe, that Saul seems to me, to have treated the word *priest*, on this occasion, as if it had been a term of reproach; for, when he commands them to be massacred, his expression is, — *Turn, and slay the priests of the Lord.* And again; when the soldiers refused the butchery, *Turn thou,* (says he to Doeg) *and fall upon the priests.* Whereas, had he shewn the least reverence to their character, I think he should have chosen, rather to have mark'd them by their guilt, than their function; and spoken of them, on this occasion, under any other appellation, such as that of enemies, traytors, &c. But, possibly, it was the fashion of the times, to treat the most venerable name among men with contempt, or he had a mind to have it so. Whether this be a surer mark of great impiety, or great politeness, the reader will best judge for himself; as he will best learn from the *history of the world*, how far men of this turn (scoffers of sacred things, and characters) have been remarkably blest'd, or curs'd in themselves, and their posterity. Even kings would do well to remember, that whatever rightful power they may have over priests, as their subjects; God, whose priests they are, hath yet more over them:

*Regum timendorum in proprios greges,
Reges in ipsos imperium est Jovis.*

Kings claim obedience from the flocks they rule,
But *Jove's* dominion sways the scepter'd king.

Two ends *Saul* attained by this massacre : first, that he weakned the power of the priests, whom he had made his enemies, by slaying such a number of them, and stripping the order of their possessions ; and, secondly, that he strengthened the hands of his own family, and confirmed the faith of his tribe, then doubtful, by conferring those possessions upon them : for there seems to be no other reason, besides that already mentioned, why all the inhabitants of the city were destroyed, but that their possessions might be made a prey ; unless it were, that his enmity against God, for depriving him of his kingdom, carried him not only to destroy his priests, but also the *Netbinims*, and *Gibeonites*, (if these were different orders of men) that so the tabernacle of God, then at *Nob*, might be utterly destitute of all kind of attendance ! And this best accounts for what *Josephus* tells us, that *Doeg*, taking some men, as wicked as himself, to his assistance, slew three hundred and eighty-five persons.

I shall conclude this point, with one short observation, which hath scarce escaped any of the commentators :

Here we have a remarkable instance, of God's turning the worst devices of the wicked, to the purposes of his providence ! *Eli* had grievously offended God ; *because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not*. For this reason, God denounced his vengeance against his race, and declared, that they should be cut off by a sudden, and surprizing destruction, in one day, (1 *Sam. chap. ii, iii.*) and the priesthood transferred to another family. And now the former part of the divine denunciation was fulfilled, by *Saul's* unparalleled cruelty ;

elty ; and the latter, in a way, which belongs not to this history to explain.

C H A P. XIV.

The Siege of Keilah raised by David, and the Philistines defeated. What Return the men of Keilah intended to make him, for his Benefaction.

THE person, mentioned in the last chapter, to have escaped from the slaughter of the priests, was *Abiathar*, the son of *Abimelech*. The most probable account of this escape, is thus ; that being left to keep the sanctuary, whilst his father, and the rest of the priests went to wait upon *Saul*, (for it is not to be imagined, that the tabernacle was left wholly unattended, by any one of the order at that time) he, upon the first notice of their destruction, made his escape ; and, having no other recourse, fled to *David* for protection, to whom he related the destruction of the LORD's priests.

David received him, as he was bound to do the son of his benefactor, and friend ; of whose destruction, and that of his whole house, he had been the unhappy occasion : *And David said unto Abiathar*, (1 Sam. xxii. 22, 23.) *I knew it that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul : I have occasioned the death of all the persons of thy father's house. Abide thou with me, fear not ; for he that seeketh my life, seeketh thy life ; but with me thou shalt be in safeguard.*

David knew that their enemy, and their danger was the same : but he had firm trust in God, that he should, in the end, be safe delivered from that enemy ; and, therefore, promised *Abiathar* his protection, with greater confidence.

On this occasion he composed the lii^d psalm ; which begins in the style of a man filled with indignation, and sorrow, and breaks out into the justest, and bitterest question, that ever was put to tyrants !

Why

*Why boastest thou thy self, O man of power *, that thou canst do mischief ; whereas the goodness of God is from day to day ?*

A king is the representative of God upon earth ; and his duty, to imitate the Divine Goodness ! to protect, and to bless. — A tyrant reverses this glorious resemblance ; and employs that power, to all the purposes of mischief, which was only bestowed for those of beneficence.

I am sensible, that interpreters understand this psalm, as relating only unto *Doeg* ; and I own, the greater part of it relates solely to him : but, with great submission, this first verse, which, I think, can only relate to *Saul*, sufficiently proves, that he also was glanced at, as he well deserved.

David's next adventure is, I think, one of the noblest of his whole life, and, perhaps, the most extraordinary of any recorded in history !

The *Philistines* (probably, encouraged by *David's* disgrace, and *Saul's* distraction) invaded *Judab*, and besieged *Keilah*, wasting the country all-around it. Another man in *David's* place, would have rejoiced at this invasion, and, perhaps, encouraged it ; and this, both from self-preservation, and policy. First, because he had nothing to fear for himself, whilst *Saul* had such an enemy upon his hands ; and secondly, because the distress of his country, was the likeliest means to bring *Saul* to reason, and force him to recal, and be reconciled to his best champion. But *David* was governed by other, than these narrow views ! nor safety, nor honour were desirable to him, purchased by the distress of his country, and his friends. His bosom beat with an eager desire to relieve *Keilah* : But it was not an adventure to be unadvisedly undertaken ; and, therefore, we are assured

* This translation is more literal, and more agreeable to the decency of *David's* style, who was careful to avoid the least appearance of disrespect, in all his treatment of *Saul*.

assured (1 Sam. xxiii.) that he enquired of God, saying, *Shall I go, and smite these Philistines?*

This is, to me, one of those passages of Scripture, that give evidence of their own truth. None, but a hero, could put the question! and none, but God, could resolve it: *And the Lord said unto David, Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah.*

But still his men thought the undertaking too desperate, and loudly disclaimed it, saying, *Behold, we be afraid here in Judah; how much more then, if we come to Keilah, against the armies of the Philistines?*

They had more than difficulty enough to defend themselves against *Saul*, where they were; and could it be less than madness, to provoke more, and greater armies? Doubtless, *Saul* would send forces to beat off the *Philistines*, and then, they should be pent in between two hostile armies. And yet, notwithstanding all this, *David* undertook, and achieved the adventure; which it was impossible he should, against such fears, and such reasonings of his forces, from any motive, other than the assurance of divine protection, and aid. Which fully confirms the Scripture account of this matter, that he did not undertake it, until he had, for the fuller satisfaction of his associates, again consulted, and was again assured of success, by the divine oracle; or, to speak more properly, by the intercession of the prophet *Gad*; for *Abiathar*, who had the ephod, had not yet reached him.

David's success, on this occasion, was very extraordinary; he saved the city, and the inhabitants; he delivered the country all around, from the ravages of the enemy; he smote the *Philistines* with a great slaughter, and brought away their cattle: by which means he was enabled to subsist himself, and his forces, without being a burden to his country.

One would imagine, that this extraordinary success, and deliverance of so great a city, might secure *David* a safe retreat, among the men of *Keilah*: but it was not so; such is the nature of man, present dangers quickly obliterate past obligations! Gratitude is, without question, a most lovely virtue, but seldom lives in the extreams, either of adversity, or success! it is like those fine colours, which storms, and sunshine equally deface.

David, who judged of other mens generosity by his own, hoped, he should be protected in *Keilah*; and *Saul*, who judged in the same manner of their baseness, believed, he should not: and, therefore, the Scripture assures us, that he rejoiced, upon receiving the news of *David's* being shut up there (1 Sam. xxiii. 7.): *And it was told Saul, that David was come to Keilah: And Saul said, God hath delivered him into mine hand; for he is shut in, by entering into a town, that hath gates, and bars.*

I know no one thing more grating to a good ear, than strains of piety from a profane mouth; to hear a wretch, who had despised the commands of God, murdered his priests, and desolated his sanctuary! in a word, lived in open defiance of the Divinity! to hear a wretch talk of God, and divine determinations in his favour, is beyond enduring! Doubtless, his reasoning was right; and, had he left out his hypocrisy, nothing could be objected to it.

Upon the news of *David's* being shut up in *Keilah*, *Saul*, immediately, set himself to raise a great army, and go against it; and, at the same time, sent secret emissaries to seduce the inhabitants, believing it impossible, that they could hold out, against the united power of terror, and treachery.

David's security hitherto arose, in a great measure, from the swiftness, and secrecy of his motions, and the obscurity of his retreats: but now *Saul* rightly judged, that the same walls, and gates, which protected

ted him, shut him in ; and neither they, nor their keepers were impregnable.

David was doubtful upon the point ; he had certain intelligence, that *Saul* was determined to besiege him * ; and he also found out, that *Saul* was secretly practising against him within the city, and he knew not, what might be the issue of his machinations ; and, therefore, resolved wholly to rely upon the divine direction. He put up his earnest prayers to God, to be resolved, what to do in this exigency ; and he enquired of him (as it is generally understood) by *Abiathar* (who reached him about this time with the *Ephod*, and *Urim*, and *Tbummim*) ; and God, who never fails those that put their trust in him, and with humble, and fervent faith implore his protection, relieved him in his distress, and assured him, the men of *Keilab* would deliver him up. Upon which he arose, he, and his men, (being now about six hundred) and departed from the city †, not knowing whither to turn himself.

And here, methinks, is an event, that will easily solve that hard question in the schools, about the consistency of the divine prescience with human free-will.

A good politician, that was let into the course of *Saul's* secret practices with the men of *Keilab*, and had fair opportunities of sitting their dispositions upon the point, might fairly pronounce upon the event : How much more, then, that All-seeing God, who *searcheth the secrets of the heart, and seeth the thoughts afar off*, seeth them in all their secret

H 2

work-

* This appears evidently from his prayer : — O Lord God of Israel, thy servant hath certainly heard, that Saul seeketh to come to Keilab, to destroy the city for my sake.

† Now it is that his men were increased to six hundred : which grounds a conjecture, that the reputation of his bravery, and conduct in this last expedition, added to that accession of wealth, which he had gained by the spoil of the *Philistines*, now attached a considerable number of men, all chosen warriors, to his interest.

workings, tendencies, and temptations, and through all their mazes, and masks!

When *Saul* heard of *David's* escape from *Keilab*, having no further intelligence of his measures, he forbore to pursue him.

The treachery of the men of *Keilab* to *David*, hath given the criticks occasion to observe, how much more honourable the behaviour of the *Atbenians*, was to their guardians, their orators! whom no threats could oblige them to give up, to the resentments of *Alexander*.

C H A P. XV.

David flies to the Wilderness of Ziph, where he hath an Interview with Jonathan. The Ziphites inform Saul of his Haunts, who eagerly pursues him.

WHEN *David*, and his men departed from *Keilab*, the text tells us, that they went, whithersoever they could go. So that, had he been asked, where he intended to shelter himself, he might have answered, as *Luther* did to the same question, when proscribed by the emperor, and excommunicated by the pope, *Sub celo*, Somewhere under the cope of heaven.

Blessed be God, his protection is not to be precluded by proscriptions, nor confined by excommunications! I mean, such as are wicked, and unjust. Let the sinner, nevertheless, beware of the righteous sentence, that shuts him out from the divine ordinances. This I am sure of, that *David* often laments his exclusion from them, though altogether involuntary, and unavoidable.

After *David*, and his men had shifted, for some time, from place to place, (we cannot say how long) they took up their residence in the mountainous wilderness of *Ziph*; of which we know no more, than that it was within the precincts of the tribe of *Judah*,
(for

(for there, as it was natural, *David* thought himself most in safety) and upon the confines of *Edom* *. It is supposed to have had its name from the *Hebrew* word *Zepbeth*, Pitch, with which it is said to have abounded †; and it had the advantage of some woods, and strong-holds.

Saul continually sent out parties, and at last went out himself, in search of him: but to no purpose; for *GOD*, as the text most properly expresses it, *delivered him not into his hand*.

When *David* was shut up in *Keilab*, *Saul* confidently pronounced, *God hath delivered him into mine hand*. And here the sacred pen-man, to shew the vanity of that ill-grounded confidence, expressly declares that *God delivered him not into his hand*; though the text assures us, that *Saul sought him every day*.

But though *Saul* could not find him, *Jonathan* could, and took this opportunity of his father's absence, to go in quest of his friend, to commune with him, to console, and to support him, the best he could, in his afflictions, to give him new assurances, and pledges of his affection, and to confirm him by a new ratification of their former covenant, for love delights as much to iterate assurances of fidelity, as doubt, or distrust can do.

As this interview with *David*, could not be brought about without the greatest danger to *Jonathan*'s life, there is no doubt, but they took the greatest precautions, to keep it well concealed. They met in a wood; and we may well be assured, that the time, the place, and the mutual danger, suggested, to such friends as they were, a thousand fresh occasions of renewing, and, if possible, increasing their endearments.

As they now once more renewed the solemn, and sacred covenant, they had long since entered into,

* *Josh.* xv. 24.

† This is the more probable, if, as some place it, it was situate in the confines of the lake *Asphaltites*.

it is probable, that, for more solemnity, as well as mutual satisfaction, they did this in the presence of *Abiathar*, the priest, and *Gad*, the prophet of God. And, it is to be presumed, they had few, if any other, witnesses of their conference.

This adventure, in the hands of a profane author, would make a most delightful episode! When we hear of two such men, meeting at such a place, and on such an occasion, our curiosity is raised to the height, and our imaginations are at work; and no writer could be so insensible, and unanimated, as not to take delight in indulging both himself, and us, if he were not tied down to a strict, and inviolable adherence to the truth. And hence it is, that as the sacred penman, probably, knew no more than he related, and would relate only what he knew, we know no more of this conference, than what *David* could not but report, both in prudence, and in justice to his friend, that *he strengthened his band in God*; that is, comforted, and confirmed him, in the assurance of the divine protection, and deliverance, and exaltation to the kingdom in the end: *Fear not* (said he); *the band of Saul, my father, shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee, and that also Saul my father knoweth* *.

It were hard to determine, which we ought most to admire upon this occasion, the moderation, the friendship,

* 1 Sam. xxiv. 20. Though this matter never came to a trial, yet I own, I cannot help being in some pain for the continuance of this union, in such a subordination. Though there are instances (but few indeed) of the continuance of such an union, where, perhaps, it is less to be expected, in an equal participation of power. Such, or something like it, was that of *Adrian* and *Antoninus Pius*; as also that of *Frederick* and *John*, Dukes of *Saxony*, quoted by the learned *Dr. Trapp* from *Exner*; who, as they dwelt both in one, and the same house, so their mutual love grew to the last, *in utriusque periculis, & gravissimis deliberationibus, dum omnia in republica communicatis sententiis constituebant*.

friendship, the piety, or the unexampled generosity of *Jonathan*. To be able to resign a kingdom, with that calmness, that frankness, that tender love, and inviolable fidelity to his rival, and that steady submission to the will of GOD, seems to have something in it, infinitely beyond all the other praises of heroism.

How concisely, and yet how compleatly, are the characters of two such men as *Saul*, and *Jonathan*, summed up in that just reflection of *Hecuba*, in *Euripides* :

Ὁ μὲν πονηρός οὐδέν ἄλλο πλὴν κακός
Ὁ δ' ἱσθλός, ἱσθλός οὐδὲ συμφορᾶς ὑπὸ
Φύσιν διέφθειρ', ἀλλὰ χρηστός ἐς' ἀεί.

*The malice-blasted man is wholly bad !
The good man good ; nor on the score of loss,
Or danger will he taint his noble nature.
Benevolent, and permanent in good.*

When these excellent friends had communed, as they thought fit, and confirmed their covenant anew, *David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house.*

The felicity of these friends is well worth our notice. They had a cruel, and watchful tyrant to deal with ; and yet, they kept up a continual intercourse with one another, without any instance of treachery in any one, of all those they trusted.

David had not long sojourned in this wilderness, when the *Ziphtites*, probably, the inhabitants of the neighbouring city of the same name, came up to *Saul*, to *Gibeab*, to inform him of his haunts, and to incite him to come out against him : *Doth not David (say they) hide himself with us in strong-holds, in the wood, in the hill of Hackilah, which is on the south of Jeshimon ? Now therefore, O king, come down, according to all the desire of thy soul to come down ; and our part shall be to deliver him into the king's hand.*

They knew the eagerness of the king's to get David into his hands, and, therefore, they press him to make expedition, agreeably to that eagerness. To this he answers, with all the kindness of a man greatly obliged, and all the smoothness of a glozing hypocrite; *Blessed be ye of the Lord; for ye have compassion on me: Go, I pray you, prepare yet, and know, and see his place, where his haunt is, and who hath seen him there; for it is told me, that he dealeth very subtilly* *. See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places, where he hideth himself; and come ye again to me with the certainty, and I will go with you. And it shall come to pass, if he be in the land, that I will search him out throughout all the thousands of Judah.

Saul was now resolved to make sure work; and, therefore, he would not beat up this poor partridge upon the mountains, (as David calls himself) 'till he had spread his net all around him; 'till he had disposed his spies, throughout all the thousands of Judah, and taken his measures so, that it was impossible, that he should escape him.

What intelligence he received after this, from the Ziphites, is not told us: but from the eagerness, with which they entered into all his impotence of revenge, there is little doubt of their having soon sent him the best they could get; for we find, that he

* Here is that fine observation of Horace verified:

At nos virtutes ipsas invertimus - - -

- - - - - hic fugit omnes

Insidias, nullique malo latus obdit apertum?

(Cum genus hoc inter vitæ versetur, ubi acris

Invidia, atque vigent ubi crimina) pro bene sano,

Ac non incauto, scilicet astutumque vocamus.

Sat. 3. l. 1.

One spurs the snares that subtil malice laid,
Nor will unguarded bare his breast to ill:
Shou'd he within those regions chance to live,
Where envy dwells, and ev'ry guilt prevails,
His wise precaution, and his solid sense,
Are branded with names of guile, and craft.

he soon after came out against *David*, with his forces, and well knew, where to find him. *David* was then in the plain of the wilderness of *Maon*; whither *Saul*, according to his intelligence, pursued him: which when *David* learnt, (for he also wanted no proper intelligence) he forsook the plain, and took to the mountains; whither *Saul* also pursued him, with all diligence.

David was on one side of the mountain, making all possible speed to get away; and *Saul* on the other, pursuing, and extending both wings of his army to encompass him, when news was brought him, in all haste, that the *Philistines* had invaded (in the original it is, *poured themselves out upon*) the land, and were putting all to fire, and sword! This stopt him short, and turned him from an enemy, who did no mischief to his country, to repel one, that wasted it.

Thus was *David* delivered, by the timely interposition of Providence, from one of the most imminent dangers of his whole life.

To this refer that prayer, and praise, and thanksgiving, which make up the livth psalm. All the parts of which the very learned Dr. *Patrick* applies, with great judgment, to the present occasion.

The three first verses of it are a petition of deliverance from his enemies, then in full pursuit of him*; and spoken in the style of a man, who, in full reliance upon the protection of God, was resolved to sell his life as dear as he could. And to shew, that he thought himself justified in doing so, he calls these men, who thus wickedly attempted to take it away, strangers; that is, heathens, and aliens from the covenant of God; and determines to treat them as such.

The

† Save me, O Lord, for thy name's sake: avenge me in thy strength, &c. — for strangers are risen up against me; and tyrants, which have not God before their eyes, seek after my soul.

. The 4th verse begins upon seeing his enemies stop short : in full assurance, that God had heard his prayer, and interposed on his behalf : *Behold, — God is my helper* * ! Concluding, in the 7th verse (not well understood in the *English* translation) to this purpose, that God had delivered him out of all his streights, (for, doubtless, it was a distressful dilemma to be forced either to die tamely, or fight his sovereign, and his own people) and that he could now calmly, and confidently survey those enemies, whom before he did not dare to look in the face †.

The prayers of great men in distress, and their thanksgivings after great deliverances, have always been matter of uncommon delight, and curiosity, to men of serious, and religious spirits ! Nor does the glory of any great man, ever shine out to their eyes in half the lustre, as when they behold him upon his knees, lifting up his eyes, or stretching out his hands to heaven ; or, what is yet greater, prostrating himself before it, in humiliation, and acknowledgment, then is the hero seen in all his dignity. And in this light, it must be owned, that *Henry* the Fourth of *France*, before the battle of *Tury* §, and *Henry* the Fifth of *England*, after that
of

* *Behold, God is my helper : the Lord is with them that uphold my soul, &c.*

† *God hath snatched me out of every strait ; — and on mine enemies hath mine eye seen ;* that is, as the *Arabick* explains it, *rested*.

§ *Davila* relates, that the king, standing still at the head of the main battalion, joining his hands, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, said so loud, that he was heard by many ; *O Lord, thou knowest the intentions of my heart, with the eye of thy providence, thou piercest into the secretest of my thoughts ; If it be best for this people, that I should attain the crown, which belongs to me by right, do thou favour, and protect the justice of my arms : but if thy will hath determined the contrary, if thou takest away my kingdom, take away my life, also at the same time, that I may shed my blood, fighting at the head of these, who put themselves in danger for my sake.*

of *Agincourt* *, and *David* after this deliverance, appear with a grandeur, very superior to that of either a *Cæsar*, or an *Alexander* ! The latter, in their height of glory, were but mere rulers of men ; but the former, upon their knees, the dependents, and the friends of God.

From this event, of *Saul's* being called off by the *Philistine* invasion, the mountain, which then parted him from *David*, was from thenceforward called *Selabammalekoth*, *The Rock of Divisions* ; a name, which, *Osiander* thinks, *David* gave it, in gratitude for this deliverance ; as a memorial, that God had there, by little less than a miracle, divided his enemy from him †.

C H A P. XVI.

The Vineyards of Engedi, in all probability, planted by David. The Adventure of the Cave explained.

WHEN *David* was delivered from *Saul*, as related in the last chapter, he departed, and took up his retreat in the strong-holds of *Engedi*,
now

* Before the battle, he told his army, among other things, That though these (the lance, the ax, the sword, and the bow) were the brave instruments to reap honour, yet he rely'd upon Omnipotence for the victory ; and it was a remarkable effect of Divine Providence, that their enemies offered them battle, on the very day appointed in England, for the people to implore a blessing on their arms : so that at the time that they were fighting, the whole body of the English nation were lifting up their hands, and eyes to heaven, for their success, and safety.——And when the battle was over, this truly great prince, sensible of the divine goodness to him, directed the cxvth psalm to be sung ; and at that verse, *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name be the glory*, he commanded his whole army, at once to prostrate themselves to the ground, in token of humiliation, and gratitude, and he himself set them the example.

† Possibly, this was a rock of one of those mountains, which *Solomon* calls the mountains of *Bether*, (*Cant.* ii. 17.) ; which, in the margin of the Bible, is interpreted *Division*.

now called *Angedi** : here he resided, during the whole time of *Saul*'s pursuing, and repelling the *Philistines*.

What time this took up, we cannot say : but from the expression here used, of *David*'s dwelling at *Engedi*, it seems to have been no inconsiderable space.

The word *En-gedi* signifies, in *Hebrew*, the *Kid's-fountain* ; from whence the neighbouring region took its name ; probably, because there they watered their flocks.

Eusebius places it on the confines of the *Dead-sea* to the West. With him, it is famous for excellent balm ; and with *Solomon*, in his *Song*, for vineyards.

Since then, it appears from the *cviith* psalm, that *David* had, in his exile, planted vineyards in the desert, (and vineyards are known to thrive among barren wilds) is it irrational to surmise, that the vineyards of *Engedi* were of his planting ; and, for that reason, peculiarly celebrated by his son † ?

This opinion is not ill supported by other circumstances. *Solomon* compares his beloved to a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of *Engedi* (*Cant.* i. 14.). If by this be meant, as some interpret it, the garden-cypress ; that is said to delight in hot, sandy ground, such as may, naturally, be expected in a desert, and, therefore, not ill suited to *Engedi*. And if, as others interpret it, the noble balsam-tree, peculiar to *Judea*, be here meant ; *Pliny* tells us, that this anciently grew there only in two royal gardens.

Now *Eusebius*, and *St. Jerom* tell us, it grew in the vineyards of *Engedi* ; may we not then, fairly, conclude, that this was anciently a royal garden ?
And

* *Thevenot's Travels*, part 1. chap. 47.

† Possibly too, this may be alluded to, *Cant.* iv. 6. *I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, to the hill of frankincense.*

And what reason so likely for its being so distinguished, a scene so rude, so untempting, and of such difficult access, as its having been, originally, planted by *David*? Nay, there is a place still shewn there, in the recess of a low valley, said to have been *Solomon's* garden, called *Hortus Conclusus*, because it is shut in by two high hills.

I am persuaded, that all readers of refinement take a pleasure, in pursuing great men to their retirements; and their curiosity is agreeably gratified, in contemplating upon their amusements, and employments in those recesses. For my own part, I must confess, I behold *David* with more pleasure, retiring to a desert, after the conquest of *Goliath*, the relief of *Keilah*, and the repeated defeats of the *Philistines*, there weeding his wilds, planting, and pruning his vineyards, and tending his balsam, than I do *Cincinnatus*, returning to his plough from his dictatorship, and his triumph! Indeed, the pleasure of attending him thither, is very much allayed, by the regret to see him so soon disturbed, and forced to fly once more for his life; for *Saul* was no sooner returned from repelling the *Philistines*, but he enquired eagerly after *David*. And being told, that he was in the wilderness of *Engedi*, he pursued him thither with three thousand men, chosen out of all *Israel*. His intelligence was, that *David* was in that wilderness, and he naturally expected to find him, in the most unfrequented recesses, and fastnesses of it. And that he went thither in quest of him, is plainly implied in the text, which tells us, that *Saul* went to search for him, upon the faces of the rocks of the wild goats*; that is, upon the highest, and craggiest cliffs! doubtless, according to the information he had received, of *David's* residing there.

David was a soldier, and a master in the trade; and, from his knowledge of *Saul's* skill in the military

tary art, could form a rational conjecture, how he would reason, and conduct himself in this pursuit. He knew very well, that rocks could be surrounded, and fastnesses starved out by a long siege; and, therefore, he had no way to escape, but by hiding himself in a place, where *Saul*, according to the intelligence he had received, and according to all the rules of prudence, and military skill, could have no reason to expect him.

There happened to be a large, capacious cave, on the side of the high-way to these mountains, by the sheep-cotes, the publick place of resort, to all that fed, and milk'd the flocks, and of consequence, the most unlikely place in the world, for a fugitive to hide himself in, because the most publick, and frequented: into this cave, *David*, watching his opportunity, (probably, in the dead, and silence of the night) stole, with all his followers.

If he escaped *Saul's* search here, which he had little reason to fear, he then, had his choice of two advantages from it; either, when *Saul* was past by, to steal, in the dead of the night following, into some other part of the country; or else, if he could subsist himself where he was for two, or three days, he might, when *Saul*, and his army were sufficiently harrassed in their *wild-goat chase* *, and obliged to give it over, steal back to those very mountains they had quitted, and effectually elude their search.

How this conduct will be deemed of in a *David*, I cannot say: but am persuaded, that in an *Eumenes*, or a *Sertorius*, it had been crowned with sufficient applause.

Whether *Saul* traversed these wildernesses, or what time he might have spent in search of *David*, is not so much as hinted at in the text. We only learn, that as he passed by the cave, where *David*, and his men lay, whether oppressed by the heat of the day,
or

* The common expression of *wild-geese chase*, I take to be a corruption: beasts only are chased.

or urged by some necessary call of nature, he stept into the cave, as the text expresses it, *to cover his feet.*

It was easy to discern who he was, by the light from without, and by the noise of his attendants; and it is natural to believe, that, upon the first sight of him, *David*, and his men concluded themselves betrayed, and undone.

We have a psalm expressly penned by himself, in memory of this adventure; and it is astonishing, that no commentator, or writer of sacred history, hath ever applied, or explained the adventure by it; especially, considering, how clear it is with this comment, and how utterly unintelligible without it. All the motions of *David's* mind, on this occasion, his fears, his apprehensions, his prayers to God for deliverance, are very naturally set forth by himself in this psalm.

Upon the first sight of *Saul*, he lifts up his soul, in secret prayers, and complaints to God; concluding, that he was betrayed, and given up: *In the way, wherein I walked, have they privily laid a snare for me.* And he was confirmed in that persuasion, when turning about, and looking on his companions, he observed, they did not regard him; their minds, as it was natural, were so entirely taken up with their own danger, that they little thought of him. In all probability, they looked (as well they might) pale, and disconcerted! Fear hath sometimes all the appearance of guilt, and *David* might well mistake it for such:

*I looked * on my right hand, (said he) and saw there was no man, that would know me.* What should he do? he had no refuge, and, as he thought, no man would stand by him: *I had no place, (saith he) and no man cared for my soul!* In this extremity, he had
no

* In the original, it is all a prayer; and, in that view, much more beautiful. The sense of this verse stands thus: — O Lord, Look on my right hand, and see, there is none that knows me.

no resource but in God : *I cried (saith he) unto thee, O Lord, and said; Thou art my hope, and my portion in the land of the living : consider my complaint, for I am brought very low. O deliver me from my persecutors, for they are too strong for me. Bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks unto thy name : which thing if thou wilt grant me, then shall the righteous resort unto my company.*

His prayers were quickly heard, and his terrors removed ; for when he saw *Saul* composing himself to rest, instead of attempting upon him, he soon concluded that all was safe. It was then easy for him to see, that he was not betrayed ; nay, more, that he, and his men were well hid, by the advantage of their situation, in the recess, and gloom of the cave ; especially considering, that they lay, as the text tells us, *in the sides of it*, where the natural shadowings of the rocks might conceal them. His men also, recovering from their fright, and observing *Saul* in this defenceless condition, soon took heart, and encouraged, and urged him, as it was natural, to lay hold of this opportunity, which God had put into his hand, to rid himself of his mortal enemy.

Never, sure, was man in greater streights, than *David* at this juncture. If he complied, it is true, he should get rid of his worst enemy ; but, at the same time, he must massacre his father, and his king ! If he refused, he ran the hazard of provoking his own men to desperation ; possibly, so far, as to forsake him, and leave him to himself, who refused to serve both himself, and them, when it was in his power ; especially, if there was such a prophecy, (which they seem plainly to refer to) That God would deliver *David's enemy into his hands* : * for, in that case, what was this conduct of *David's*,
in

* 1 Sam. xxiv. 4, — *And the men of David said unto him, Behold the day, of which the Lord said unto thee, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayst do to him, as it shall seem good to thee.*

in effect, but opposing himself to the divine determinations?

Add to all this, the danger he ran another way; for if the least of these whispers, or motions had reached *Saul's* ears, the inevitable consequence was death! And, indeed, it is not easy to say, at first sight, why he heard them not, until we come to consider, with some commentators, that, it may be, he was asleep; or, with others, that the whistling of wind, or rustling of leaves, in the mouth of the cave, might have prevented him; or, lastly, the great depth of the recess, or noise of his forces from without.

And yet, notwithstanding all these dangers, and this remonstrance, *David* could be prevailed upon no further, than to rise, and (going up softly to *Saul*) cut off one of the skirts of his garment; and no sooner had he done even that, but he repented of it: *His heart smote him*, (says the text) *because he cut off Saul's skirt. And he said unto his men, The Lord forbid, that I should do this thing unto my master, the Lord's anointed, to stretch forth my hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the Lord.* So *David* stayed his servants, or (as the *Hebrew* expresses it) *broke them* with these words, and suffered them not to rise against *Saul*.

St. Chrysostom exerts his usual eloquence on this occasion, in praise of *David's* magnanimity; nor would any eloquence, less than his, be endured on the occasion. The truth is, encomiums add nothing to it; nor will the generous reader, bear to be embarrassed with them.

The account of *David's* going into this cave, and *Saul's* not expecting him there, seems to me the most natural account of the matter: but the *Rabbins*, who are never contented with nature, and, indeed, seldom even with the letter of Scripture, have added another circumstance from tradition, and, possibly, a true one.

They tell us, that when *Saul* went up to the cave, he went with an intention to search, if *David* were in it (than which nothing can be more improbable) : But observing the mouth of the cave, overspread with a spider's web, he concluded, that nothing had lately gone into it ; and so, declining all thoughts of search, he only slept in, on another occasion.

I shall not detain the reader with any disquisition, upon the probability of this circumstance ; but only observe to him, that there is a much more recent relation of a like escape, from a like cause, in the accounts left us of *Felix*, the martyr, whose persecutors pursuing him to a cave, were stopt short by the interposition of a spider's web : which gave occasion to that pretty reflection of *Paulinus* ;

Et aërio cessit vis ferrea filo :

Th' aërial film repell'd the iron force *.

When *David* returned from cutting off *Saul's* skirt, and restrained his men from doing him violence, *Saul* rose up out of the cave, and went on his way. *David* followed soon after ; and when he saw *Saul* at a proper distance, called out, and addressed himself to him, in this manner,—*My Lord the KING !* — And when *Saul* looked back, upon hearing himself called, *David* bowed himself down to the earth, to do him obeisance, and then proceeded to expostulate with him, in the softest, and most submissive terms,—why he should listen to the idle reports of such malignant men, as would make him believe, that *David* meant him harm ; whereas now he might judge, by his own experience, of the truth of such reports ; inasmuch as, a few moments ago, he had him absolutely in his power, and yet would do him no mischief, though earnestly urged to

* The *Arabs* have adopted this relation, and applied it to *Mahomet*.

to it! Then, holding up the skirt of his robe; *My father!* (said he) (1 Sam. xxiv.) *See, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand! For in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou, and see, that there is neither evil, nor transgression in mine hand: And I have not sinned against thee; yet thou huntest my soul to take it.* Then, changing his tone, he calls upon God, in a most solemn manner, to judge between them: *The Lord judge between me, and thee, and the Lord avenge me of thee: but mine hand shall not be upon thee: as saith the proverb of the ancients, Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked: but mine hand shall not be upon thee; that is, Guilt is the consequence, and fruit of guilt: if I had been guilty of conspiring against thee, I should have crowned that guilt, by killing thee, when it was in my power.*

When he had thus cleared himself to the king, and struck him with a thorough conviction of his innocence, perhaps too, with terror of the divine vengeance, for the oppression, and persecution of innocence; he then returns to the gentleness, and submission of his first expostulation; urging, that the king debased himself; that it was beneath the dignity of so great a prince, to pursue so insignificant a creature as he was: — *After whom is the king of Israel come out? after a dead dog, after a flea?* And then concludes all, with a repeated appeal to Almighty God, and an earnest prayer for protection, and deliverance.

And it came to pass, says the text, (1 Sam. xxiv. 16, &c) when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And Saul lift up his voice, and wept. And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil. And thou hast shewed this day, how that thou hast dealt well with me: forasmuch as, when the Lord had delivered me into thine hand, thou

killedst me not. For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? Wherefore, the Lord reward thee good, for that thou hast done unto me this day. And now, behold, I know well, that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand*. Swear now, therefore, unto me by the Lord, that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name, out of my father's house. And David sware unto Saul: and Saul went home; but David, and his men got them up unto the hold.

Saul knew, that such magnanimity could not but predominate in the end; he knew, how much this act of heroism, added to so many preceding, would make him amiable, and admired by the whole world, and above all he knew his divine designation to the throne, and, therefore, he predicted his success.

I shall trouble the reader but with two short observations, upon this most pathetick speech of *Saul's*.

The first is, that his sense of *David's* generosity must be very strong, when he beseeches God to reward it. Indeed, *Saul* had no equivalent to give *David*, for the kindness shewn him; and, therefore, he refers him to God, for retribution. For if, after this, he should even save *David's* life, yet still, he could only save the life of his best benefactor; whereas

* This he knew, says St. *Chrysostom*, from *David's* manners, from his kingly virtues, as well as his uncommon Success. "*Saul*" (says Dr. *Trapp*) being melted by those coals of kindness, which "*David* had heaped upon his head, poureth out himself in a flood of passionate expressions, and for the present, spake as he thought: but good thoughts make but a thorough-fare of wicked hearts; they stay not there, as those that like not their lodging; their purposes, for want of performance, are but as clouds without rain; or, as *Hercules's* club in the tragedy, of a great bulk, but stuffed with moss and rubbish".

whereas *David* both spared, and saved the life of his most mortal enemy.

The second is, that *David*, by sparing his enemy, found himself possess'd of the proudest pleasure, human vanity could wish, to see his prince his petitioner! to see his foe his suppliant! conscious, and confessing his own guilt, and *David's* superiority! and begging that mercy to his issue, which he himself had just experienced, and had not deserved. Who would not save an enemy, for the joy of so glorious a triumph!

C H A P. XVII.

Samuel's Death, and Character. David sojourns in the Wilderness of Paran. A Conjecture concerning Orpheus.

THE last chapter shewed us *Saul*, convinced, overwhelmed with *David's* generosity, repentant, and seemingly reconciled: but it was a reconciliation, which *David* could not confide in. He had too well experienced *Saul's* unsteadiness, in his reconcilements, or, to speak more plainly, his inveterate envy, and invincible aversion; and credulity had now been excess of folly. And, therefore, the text tells us, that when *Saul* went home, *David, and his men gat them up into the hold*: but whether, by this he meant some fastness, in the mountains of the wild goats, or that hold, which he had before possessed in the hill of *Hackilab*, I cannot say. If he returned to *Hackilab*, doubtless, he did it to the confusion, and perhaps, in some measure, for the punishment of the *Zipbites*, who basely betrayed him, and now, must receive him again, (and, it may be, subside him) reconciled to his king. But my opinion is, that he returned, with new pleasure, to finish his vineyard, and his other improvements, at *Engedi*.

About this time, died the great prophet *Samuel*, in the ninety-seventh, or ninety-eighth year of his age; and all the *Israelites* were gathered together, and lamented him, (lamented him for many days, says *Josephus*) and buried him, in his house at *Ramah*.

Here we are to take notice, that the *Jews* had no place of publick sepulture; each family had its private sepulchres. And this appears to have been the practice, from *Abraham* to *Joseph* of *Arimathea*. They were, indeed, mostly in fields, and in rocks; and *Samuel* is the first we read of, who was buried in his own house*; though we are afterwards told, that *Joab* was buried in the same manner, 1 *Kings* ii, 34. And the practice might, for ought we know, have been frequent amongst them; as, we are told, it was enjoined the *Thebans*, before they built a house, to build a sepulchre in the place.

Samuel had now ruled *Israel* sixteen, or, as others think, twenty years, before the reign of *Saul*; and judged them (that is, was their principal judge) for about forty years after. And it is no wonder, that so righteous a ruler, and so just a judge, should be uncommonly, and universally lamented; especially, when the wisdom, and equity of his government, compared with *Saul's* tyranny, and extravagance, made his memory more dear, and his loss more regretted.

He was now attended by all *Israel* to his grave; and his remains were, many centuries after, removed, with incredible pomp, and almost one continued train of attendants, from *Ramah* to *Constantinople*, by the emperor *Arcadius*, A. D. 401.

How singular was the character, and the felicity of *Samuel*!

Devoted

* No more, as I apprehend, is meant by this, but that he was buried at his house, in his garden, probably; for in 1 *Sam.* xxviii. 3. he is said to have been buried in his own city.

Devoted to God from the womb *, and worthy to be so! Early dedicated to the Divinity, and hallowed with his influence! Descended from prophets; himself a greater!

The service of *his* God made the early business of his life; nor ever interrupted by any thing, but the service of his country.

The Scriptures are, I own, the delight of my life: but the pleasure of perusing them, is always heightened, when they demonstrate their own veracity.

No man, in his senses, in the vigour of life, and in the age of ambition, and avarice, forced by no danger, urged by no guilt, and pressed by no infirmity of mind, or body, ever yet, voluntarily, and of his own choice, resigned the supreme power, secluded his sons from the succession †, and elected two strangers to it, in succession, neither of whom he had ever seen before.

Now *Samuel* did all this; and, therefore, when the Scriptures assure me, he did it by the divine command, I cannot help believing them: the narration carries its own irresistible evidence along with it.

Happy *Samuel*! exalted to supreme power, without ambition; exerting it, without oppression, or avarice; and resigning it, without reluctance §.

I 4

Retiring

* Of him might be said, what was only more applicable to one other man:—*Thou art he, that took me out of my mother's womb: thou wast my hope, when I hanged yet upon my mother's breasts. I have been left unto thee ever since I was born: thou art my God, even from my mother's womb.* Psal. xxii. 9, 10.

† I am sensible, that his sons were complained of, and deserved to be shut out from the succession: but their actual seclusion was only, (as far as appears) in consequence of *Saul's* divine designation to the throne.

§ If it be objected, that the people desired a king in his stead, I own it: but yet his resignation was not in compliance with their desire, but the divine command. He was the deputy of God, and would, and could, only resign at his instance; and when God commanded, he readily obeyed.

Retiring (rare felicity !) with undiminished dignity ! or, to speak more justly, with added honour, from the concurrent, and universal testimony of his country, to his equity, and incorruption ! Oh, would princes so use their power, or so resign it !

Illustrious in the splendor of a throne, and yet more so in the shade of a cell ; so far from envying his successor to the supreme power, that he pitied, and he prayed for him. He had raised him by the divine favour, but could not restore him.

It were hard to determine, which was happiest, his life, or his death. He lived to the noblest purposes, the glory of God, and the good of his country ; and he died, full of years, and honours, universally lamented, and desired.

Such was *Samuel*. Such always were, and such always will be, in a good measure, all those, whose beginnings are laid in true religion, whose duty is their delight, and their God their glory !

The burial of men of eminence, among the *Jews*, was a solemnity of some continuance ; like that of *Jacob*, for whom the *Egyptians*, we are told, mourned *threescore and ten days*. And as all ranks of people crowded to this solemnity, from all parts, *David* found this a fit opportunity to shift his scene, and to pass, less noticed, into the wilderness of *Paran*, to the south of *Judea*, and to the confines of *Arabia*. Nay, the *Mabometan* writers make it part of *Arabia Deserta* ; and *David* himself is generally thought to own it such, in that dolorous complaint of the cxxth psalm, where he laments his so long continuance * *in the tents of Kedar*. But that by no means follows ; for he might, upon *Saul's* pursuit, have passed from *Paran* to *Arabia*, and sojourned there a considerable time. But, as it was the place of *Ismael's* residence, it cannot, I think, well be doubted to have been part of *Arabia*.

And

* What is rendered, in our Translation, *with Mesch*, is agreed, by critics, to be understood, *so long*.

And here it is obvious to observe, how little mankind know, what to wail, or wish for, in this world.

David now laments his detention in those wilds : and yet, his sojourning there, served, in effect, but the better to prepare, and fit him for his conquests, over the *Edomites* ; which opened his way to the *Red-sea*, and in consequence, to that traffick, which, in his own, and his son's reign, so remarkably enriched, and aggrandized his kingdom.

However, his situation, for the present, was very disagreeable to him. He loved peace, and order, and discipline ; which ill suited the restless, and turbulent spirit of the *Arabs* : *My soul* (says he) *hath long dwelt among them, that are enemies unto peace. I labour for peace : but when I speak unto them thereof, they make them ready to battle.*

It is evident from these words, that *David* had endeavoured to mend the manners of these savages ; to reclaim them from their fierce, and savage dispositions, and inspire them with the love of peace, and the arts of peace.

It may be thought a wild conjecture ; but it will not injure the reader to consider it. What if *Orpheus* in *Thrace*, was no other than *David* in *Paran* ?

I beg only to premise, and to submit one easy case, to the candid reader's consideration ; and that is, whether, if he saw two historical pictures, (the only two of the kind, extant in the world) all whose out-lines, parts, proportions, principal figures, actions, and attitudes were exactly the same, but the colouring, and other circumstantials different ; and one of these, confessedly, ancient, and a true original ; and the other, demonstrably, later, but the date, and the author uncertain ; whether he would not conclude the later, (whatever its owners might pretend) to be, in truth, no other than a copy, industriously varied from the great, authentic, undoubted original.

How

How far this may be the case, between this part of *David's* history, and the fable of *Orpheus*, the reader will judge for himself.

In the first place, then, *Aristotle*, the most exact enquirer of all antiquity, is of opinion, that there never was such a man as *Orpheus* *; consequently, *Orpheus* is some other man, characterized under that name.

Vossius is of the same opinion with *Aristotle*, and says, that the name is *Phœnician*; and signifies, in that language, a wife, and learned man. Let us then enquire, who this real person was, who was thus characterized under the name of *Orpheus*.

The accounts of all antiquity agree in this, that he was the most eminent for his skill, and mastery on the harp, of any man that ever lived; it is allowed, that *David* was that man.

Photius tells us, he was a king (of the *Macedonians*, and *Odrysians*, near the river *Hebrus* in *Thrace*), *David* is (at least, as far as I know) the only king, of all antiquity, famous for his skill on the harp.

The common opinion is, that he was a *Thracian*. *Pausanias* says †, in one place, that the ancient *Greek* pictures, drew him in a *Grecian* dress, and that he had nothing *Thracian* about him; in another ‡, that an *Egyptian*, whose name he does not mention, insisted upon his being an *Egyptian*.

Philostratus says ||, that the *Babylonians* highly honoured him; not on account of his musick, but because they found him dress'd with a *tiara*. And *Gronovius*, in his *Roma-Subterranea*, finds some very ancient medals, in which he is represented with a *tiara* upon his head. This plainly shews him an *Asiatic* prince.

Now

* *Cicero de Nat. Deor.* lib. 1. §. 38. edit. *Davis*.

† In *Phocian*. l. 10. c. 30.

‡ In *Eliacis*, l. 6. c. 20.

|| In *Vita Apollonii*, l. 1. c. 25.

Now the word *tiara* is of *Hebrew* original, and signifies a *crown*, such as *David* took, from the king of *Ammon*'s head, and put upon his own (2 *Sam.* xii. 30.) Whom then, can such a figure so properly represent, as king *David*? I own, I know not whom else it can represent; especially, if we consider the description, *Callistratus* gives us *, of the statue of *Orpheus*, erected at *Helicon*, near those of the *Muses*. This, he says, represents him of a most beautiful person, with fine, flowing hair, and sparkling eyes, a lyre in his hand, and a *tiara* on his head, all kinds of birds, and mountainous wild beasts about him, and all fishes of the sea, all softened, and attentive to his musick. The very rocks (says he) seem'd smitten with his harmony; the rivers running from the fountains, and the waves of the sea, lifting themselves up, with love of his musick; and, lastly, all the plants of the earth hastening to him, from their several nurseries.

I shall not trouble the reader, with an application of this description, to the several circumstances of *David*'s person, and character. The relation is sufficiently obvious! and, therefore, I shall only add, that whoever reads the *Psalms of David*, and sees there the whole creation, particularly summoned in, to fill up the chorus of the divine praise †, will find this statue a fine emblem of him, and them.

David was the sweet finger of *Israel*. If we derive *Orpheus* from the *Greek*, it is a composition of two words, which signify a *fine*, or *sweet voice* (ὀραῖα φωνή.)

The name of *David*'s wife *Michal*, or *Micbol*, in *Hebrew*, is *powerful*; *Eurydice*, in *Greek*, of *extensive right*, or *jurisdiction*.

David

* *Statua Orphei*, VII.

† See *Psal.* 148. O praise the Lord, &c. ye dragons, and all deeps—mountains, and all hills: fruitful trees, and all cedars; beasts, and all cattle: worms, and feathered fowls—kings of the earth, &c.

David was the first of all, that were, properly, and professedly, poets. *Jamblichus* calls *Orpheus* the oldest of poets, (in *Vit. Pythag.*) And *Plutarch* (*de Musica*) tells us, that *Terpander*, who settled the laws of the Lyrick poetry, imitated *Orpheus*, but *Orpheus* nobody.

David was a prophet, so was *Orpheus*.

David endeavoured to reclaim the *Arabs*, worshippers of *Bacchus*.

* *Orpheus*, the *Bacchanal-Thracians*.

David had reclaimed desarts, (the tradition of the *Arabs* is, that stones, and birds were obedient to him †) but he could not reclaim the *Arabs*.

Orpheus made the rocks, woods, beasts, and birds to follow him, and stopp'd the course of waters, but could not civilize the *Thracians*.

David, the great teacher of the divine will, endeavoured to convert the *Arabs*, living in desarts, and reported, by travellers, to be very uncleanly in their eating, from rapine, and murder, to the arts of peace.

*Sylvestres homines sacer interpresque deorum,
Cedibus & fædo victu deterruit Orpheus ‡.*

Orpheus, the sacred prophet of the gods,
From slaughter, and from filthy food deterr'd
The woodmen wild - - -

David's wife was ravish'd from him, and taken down to *Laisb*, near *Acaron*,

Orpheus's wife was ravish'd § from him, and carried

* So *Herod* and *Strabo* report of them.

† *Herbelotte Biblioth. Orient.*

‡ *Horat. de Art. Poet.*

§ *Pluto* ravished his wife *Proserpine*, as she was gathering flowers in a meadow. It was prophesied of *Saul*, that he should take away the sons, and daughters of the *Israelites*, at pleasure: and the name of his wife *Achinoam*, is made up of two Hebrew words,

ried down to hell ; that is, in the style of the poets, she was carried to the region of *Acheron*.

Orpheus incessantly lamented his wife, in the woods, and caves. Can we doubt whether *David* lamented his ? a princess, that married him for love, and saved his life, apparently, at the hazard of her own.

The lvth psalm is set to the tune, or measure of a song, called *Jonathelim Recbokim* ; that is, *A dove in the remote woods*.—Surely, it is no forced conjecture, to suppose, that this was some song of *David's*, now desolate, and lamenting the loss of his wife, in the desarts of *Paran*. We could not expect to find any such song, among the *Psalms* ; they are a collection of another kind ; but some memorial of such lamentations, we might hope to find ; at least, it would not be surprizing, if we should.

The way into *Pluto's* kingdom, *Virgil* tells us, was through a dark cave, surrounded, and guarded by the lake *Avernus**, and thick, black woods. This lake is thus described by *Virgil* :

- - - Tuta lacu nigro nemorumque tenebris,
Quam super baud ullæ poterant impune volantes
Tendere iter pennis : talis sese balitus atris
Faucibus effundens, supera ad convexa ferebat.
Unde locum Graii dixerunt nomine Avernum.

And here, th' access a gloomy grove defends,
And here, th' unnavigable lake extends ;

O'er

words, which, with a common change of a *vau* for a *jod*, signify fair, or pleasant grass,

* Going to *Avernus*, a *Græcian* would express by going to *Aornon*, πρὸς Ἀορνόν, or εἰς Ἀορνόν, which is an easy corruption of *Arnon*. This river is the boundary of *Saul's* dominions, for a considerable length, and spreads, not far from its fountain, into a lake, surrounded with rocks, and woods. It was easy to blend, and confound the characters, and qualities of these two lakes.

O'er whose unhappy waters, void of light,
 No bird presumes to steer his airy flight;
 Such deadly stench from the depth arise,
 And steaming sulphur, that infects the skies.
 From hence the *Grecian* bards their legends make,
 And give the name *Avernus* to the lake.

DRYDEN.

Whoever knows any thing of the lake *Asphaltites*, will find this to be the exact description of it, in all the circumstances. This lake was the boundary of *Saul's* kingdom, for a considerable length (about an hundred miles); it was pitchy, black, foetid, averse to life, and part of it on fire, for many ages, after the invention of this fable. May not this lake, then, be *Styx*, *Acheron*, *Avernus*, and *Pblegethon*, all in one? And the scorched, and withered region round it, (still retaining the marks of *Sodom's* destruction) literally, the *Eugentes Campi*, or *Lamentable Region*? Contiguous to which is another region, of a contrary character, delightful, abounding with pleasant groves, filled with nightingales, and answering the description of the *Elysian* fields.

Aristæus, who carried off *Euridice*, has his name from ἀριστος, or rather ἀριστος, the nobility. *Pbalti*, to whom *Michal* was given by *Saul*, we may well presume, was of that order: and I submit it to the learned, in the *Hebrew*, whether *Pbaltiel* may not signify as much.

Orpheus was skilful in magick, found out the way of initiating, into the sacred mysteries, expiating crimes, curing diseases, and appeasing the wrath of the gods. (*Pausan Bæot.*) The whole œconomy of the temple-service was settled, and regulated by *David*; his prayers stopped the plague, and appeased the divine wrath; and his musick over-powered the evil spirit, that possessed *Saul*.

Orpheus

Orpheus offended the *Thracian* women, by carrying their husbands up and down after him (*ibid.*). *David's* men attended him, in all his wanderings, and, for the most part, without their wives, until their settlement in *Gath*: which, probably, their wives did not like. Nor is there any doubt, that they were all highly offended with him, when they were made captives by the *Amalekites*, in the absence of their husbands, who were then with *David*.

Orpheus is allowed to have excelled all other poets, in sacred, and religious hymns. That excellence will not, I believe, be denied to *David*.

Orpheus first taught the rites of *Bacchus*; was an excellent dancer, and made dancing a necessary right of initiation, and an established ceremonial, in the feast of the gods, (*Lucian de Saltat.*). *David's* dancing at the great feast of removing the ark, and afterwards feasting the people, both men, and women, with each a piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine, is well known. And as dancing, and drinking wine, were principal parts of the *orgia* of *Bacchus*, this might, naturally, give rise to the story of *Orpheus*, introducing the rites of *Bacchus*, among his country-men.

Orpheus soften'd the infernal king with his musick, and he let him have his wife. *David* softned king *Saul*. Now, king *Saul*, in *Hebrew*, is מלך שאול; which words are radically the same, when pointed, to signify king *Saul*, and the infernal king. He detained *David's* wife from him; at last gave her to him.

Pluto gave *Orpheus* his wife, on certain conditions *, and took her back again. *Saul* gave *David* his wife, on certain conditions, and took her back.

Pluto

* *Photius* says so, but names no conditions; nor the old *Greek* poet, quoted by *Athenæus*; but that he gave her to him, being softened with his musick. So that the condition mentioned by *Virgil* is, in all probability, an invention of his own.

Pluto is charactered sad, relentless, unmerciful; inexorable; and is described holding a sceptre, with which he drives the dead to hell; his attendants, *Cerberus*, and the *Furies*. Is this any more, than a poetick description of a melancholy, furious, outrageous, and implacable prince, as *Saul* was? who had his ministers of vengeance, always about him; and delighted to sit with a spear (that is, his sceptre) in his hand, ready to destroy, and to dart it, where his rage directed.

The only difficulty now remaining is, that *Orpheus* was, as is commonly believed, of *Thrace*, and *David* of *Palestine*; and yet even this will be removed, if we admit a conjecture of the learned *Huetius*, The people of *Palestine* (says he) are called, in *Hebrew*, **כנעני**. Now these are the same radicals, which, by an easy transposition, become **תנכני**; that is, *Tnecians*. Not to insist, that the wilds of *Thrace* were indeed, a strange place, from whence to bring the father, and founder of the *Grecian* musick. Which *Sir Isaac Newton* hath, with infinitely better reason, and judgment, derived from *Palestine*, and from the age, and actions of *David*. And that *Orpheus* was not a *Tnecian*, hath, I hope, been sufficiently proved.

But suppose the learned *Huetius* mistaken in his conjecture; it was easy to shift the scene, the better to disguise the truth, and vend the fable. Nor will it make much to our advantage, that they shifted it to a country, which, *Pliny* tells us, was the fountain of all the *Grecian* fabulosity*.

I shall not presume to pronounce any thing upon the point; but barely to observe, that it was easy to build such a fable, as that of *ORPHEUS*, upon the foundation of such a history, as this of *DAVID*.
And

* *Pliny*, indeed, says, that the *Grecians* had their learning from *Thrace*: but the authorities to the contrary, vastly outweigh in this dispute; and, particularly, *Herodotus* considers them, as a most barbarous nation. And *Diogenes Laertius*, (in *Proem.*) and *Androtion*, quoted by *Ælian*, (l. 8.) affirm the direct contrary.

And if that was not done, how, otherwise, every character in both, should, so surprizingly, and some of them so strictly correspond, king *Saul*, (the very letters that constitute the words) his character, and country, with *Pluto*, and his; *Achinoam* with *Proserpine*, *Michal* with *Eurydice*, and *David* with *Orpheus*; is to me, I own, utterly unimaginable.

C H A P. XVIII.

The Adventure of Nabal recounted at large. Mr. Bayle's Censure of David's Conduct on this Occasion considered.

DAVID, as I observed in the last chapter, could do no good, amongst those barbarians, the *Arabs*; and, for this reason, it is probable, he took the first opportunity he could, with safety, to leave them.

As it was not the purpose of the sacred historians, to give a minute description of *David's* wanderings, in his exile, but to shew the remarkable protection of the divine Providence, which attended him, in that period of his life; we should not be surprized, to find several breaks in the relation, studiously omitting minutenesses, and hastening to extraordinary, and interesting events, one of which is related, immediately after the account of *David's* going to *Paran*, and is as follows.

Maon, in the south of *Judea*, was a city, which gave its name to the neighbouring wilderness, which is thought to have been contiguous to that of *Paran*.

In this city dwelt a rich man; but, as the text expresses it, *churlish, and evil in his doings*, whose name was *Nabal*. And as the riches of those times, consisted in natural wealth, such as flocks, and herds, *Nabal*, we are told, had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats. These he fed in *Carmel*, which, possibly, was a part of the wilderness of

Maon, at least, was in its neighbourhood; not that *Carmel*, so famed for the residence of *Elisba*; for that was in the north of *Judea*, and this in the south.

In this *Carmel*, while *David* was in that neighbourhood, *Nabal* had a sheep-shearing; and, as that was anciently, and, I believe, is still, a season of great rural festivity, *Nabal* made a feast for his hinds. Which *David* hearing of, sent ten of his servants, with a very kind salutation, and a request, agreeable to the simplicity, and hospitality of that age, that he would, out of the plenty, provided for the occasion, send him, and his men some refreshment.

The man, it seems, was an unworthy descendant from the great *Caleb*; and, as I now observed, morose, and churlish, one that knew no end of the abundance, with which God had blessed him, beyond satiety, and surfeit. He was, what *Caligula* used to call *Syllanus*, a *golden brute* *. And when *David's* servants had delivered their message, he returned an answer, agreeable to his character, rude, and sullen, and very natural to that insolence, which wealth is too apt to dictate to undisciplined spirits †.

The message, and the answer, are both singular in their kind; and not unworthy our regard. The former, as it is a fine picture of the ancient, and true politeness; and the latter, a strong image of ungoverned brutality. Both of these are to be met with in 1 *Sam.* xxv. 5, &c. *And David sent out ten young men, and David said unto the young men, Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name. And thus shall ye say to him that liveth, Peace be both to thee, and peace be to thine house, and*
peace

* Χρυσὸν πρόβατον. This is properly a *golden sheep*.

† Δεινὸν γὰρ τοῖς πλουτοῦσι τοῦτο ἔμφυτον,
Σαρκιστὴν εἶναι.

peace be unto all that thou hast. And now I have heard, that thou hast shearers: now thy shepherds, which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there ought missing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel. Ask thy young men, and they will shew thee: wherefore, let the young men find favour in thine eyes: (for we come in a good day) give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand, unto thy servants, and to thy son David. And when David's young men came, they spake to Nabal according to all these words, in the name of David, and ceased.

Three things, in this message, are well worth our notice. First, the direction, *to him that liveth*; and, secondly, the salutation, *Peace to thee, and peace to thine house, &c.* In the Scripture, *living*, and being *happy* are synonymous*. David's own benevolent spirit suggested to him, that, being happy ourselves, we should delight to make others share in our happiness. God does so; and the man after God's own heart, does so too. At the same time, David well knew, that Nabal was bound to relieve him, from God's own express command†.

In the next place, the beauty, and propriety of that ancient, eastern, salutation, *Peace be to thee, &c.* is very emphatical; inasmuch as the best blessings of life, and all the social affections, attend upon peace.

And, in the last place, the modesty of this message is very remarkable; For tho' David had much real merit, towards Nabal, yet, he puts his request, only upon the foot of having no demerit towards him: well knowing, that some martial men, are wont to deem this merit enough, towards the tame

K 2

inhabitants

* From them the Latin poets learnt this style:

Vivamus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus:

Let us, my Lesbia, live, and love.

† Deut. xv. 7. *If there be among you a poor man (that is, one in necessity) of any of your brethren,—thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother.*

inhabitants of the country, and they to think it so. But, at the same time, referring him to his own servants, for a fuller information.

Stupid *Nabal*, insensible to all these civilities, returns an answer, agreeable to the bearishness of his nature (ver. 10, 11.): *And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse *? There be many servants now-a-days, that break away every man from his master. Shall I then take my bread, and my water †, and my flesh, that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be?*

When this answer was reported to *David*, his indignation rose to a high degree; but without breaking out into any other words, than a short command to four hundred of his followers, to gird on their swords, and attend him. (The other two hundred were left with the baggage.)

In the mean time, one of *Nabal's* servants reported *David's* message, and their master's answer, to their mistress *Abigail*, *Nabal's* wife; adding withal, that *David*, and his men had deserved well of their master, inasmuch as they were a guard to his flocks, night, and day, so that nothing was lost, or destroyed, during the whole time of their abode in the wilderness. And that they should have put their master in mind of all this, but that he was such a son of *Belial*, (that is, so unruly, and headstrong) they did not dare to speak to him. They ended with a strong assurance, that *David* would not let such an indignity go unrevenge, and, therefore, it behoved her to take some speedy measures, to prevent the impending evil.

Abigail was a woman of distinguished merit. She had the advantage of a beautiful person, set off by an

* He also had learned *Saul's* contemptuous style.

† Some think, that being in a desert, where water was scarce, mere water is here meant: but *water*, probably, is here put for any liquor.

an excellent understanding, a fine address, and an uncommon prudence! She was, as *Ælian* says of *Aspasia*, καλή καὶ σοφὴ, *fair, and wise*. *Abigail* had the wisdom, and the beauty of *Aspasia*, without her blemishes. We grieve to see such women, unhappily paired with brutal husbands: though, perhaps, such husbands are (to some of them) no more, than a necessary alloy to that vanity, which so many accomplishments are too apt to inspire.

As soon as the servant had done speaking, *she made haste*, (says the text) *and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles* (that is, two skins, or borachios) *of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses*; and dispatching some servants before her, told them, she would follow instantly: and did accordingly, but without saying one word of the matter to her husband.

Her servants well knew the way to *David's* haunts: *And it was so*, (says the text) *as she rode on the ass, that she came down by the covert of the hill, and behold, David, and his men came down against her, and she met them*.

Now the text informs us, that *David had said*, *Surely, in vain have I kept all that this fellow hath, in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed, of all that pertained unto him, and he hath requited me evil for good. So, and more also do God unto the enemies of David, if I leave, of all that pertain to him, by the morning light, any that pisseth against the wall*; that is, as interpreters generally expound it, he determined not to leave so much as a dog, alive in his family.

Abigail could easily perceive, both by his haste, and his looks, that vengeance was determined against her husband, and that all her address was little enough to avert it. And, therefore, as soon as ever she saw *David*, she threw herself from her ass, and fell upon her face before him, and deprecated his vengeance,

in such a strain of humble, pathetick, natural (and, for that reason, apparently, very artful) eloquence, as is not, I verily think, to be paralleled in all antiquity.

She begins, by begging, that the blame of this misconduct might light on her; but begs, at the same time, that he would please to hear what she has to say in her own excuse (as for *Nabal*, he was below *David's* notice; a man, as his name implied, of very mean understanding *): and she excuses herself, by assuring him, that she heard not a word of his message, until his servants were sent away. She then insinuates the goodness of God to him, in with-holding him from revenge, and from blood; and, in the very same sentence, insinuates a most solemn adjuration † to abstain from both: and, immediately after, beseeches him, that he would suffer his servants to accept her presents, (they were too mean for *his* acceptance) repeating her petition for forgiveness; and adding, that God would, certainly, preserve him from his enemies, whom she wishes to be all as *Nabal*; that God, whose battles he had fought, (finely insinuating, that such only were worthy his prowess) and whose laws he had hitherto kept inviolate, would certainly preserve, and, in the end, establish him in the throne. And that then, it would be matter of no remorse, or disquiet to him, that he had abstained from self-vengeance, and the shedding of innocent blood. Concluding with an earnest request, that when God had established him, he would remember her.

The

* *Nabal is his name. (says she) and folly is in him.*—*Nabal* in Hebrew, signifies a fool.

† Here *Le Clerc* observes, that whoever refused any thing that was fit, and just, when thus adjured, was as guilty of perjury, as if he had been expressly forsworn; because he was, in that case, deemed to have despised the name of God, by which that just request was made.

The beauty, energy, and address of this oration are such, as I shall not take upon me to explain, or illustrate, in any adequate degree; and, therefore, I leave it, as proper matter of curiosity to every reader of taste. To the learned, in the original, and to the less learned, in every translation.

Abigail had no sooner ended, but *David*, thoroughly changed from his purpose, and struck with horror of the vengeance, he had determined to take, breaks out into thanksgivings to God, and blessings upon her, that had turned him from his evil purpose: *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me: and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand. For, in very deed, as the Lord God of Israel liveth, which hath kept me back from hurting thee, except thou hadst hastened, and come to meet me, surely, there had not been left unto Nabal, by the morning light, any that pisseth * against the wall.*

K 4

So

* As I have long been fully satisfied, that the Scriptures are the fountain-head of all true politeness among mankind; and as nothing is a stronger instance of true politeness, than the decency, with which the necessities of nature, and the intercourse of the sexes is expressed; and I find every thing offensive in these, as carefully concealed in the *Hebrew* phraseology, as the instincts of nature dictate, the actions themselves should; I cannot help suspecting, that wherever it is otherwise in our translation, that translation is faulty. That the translators are faulty, in a very coarse offensive version from the *Greek*, is clear to a demonstration, from that passage in the xi. ch. of *St John's Gospel* at the 39 v. which should be thus translated, *Lord by this time he smelleth, for he hath been dead four days.* How offensively this very decent word, *smelleth*, is translated in our version, the reader may satisfy himself, by having recourse to it: it being abused, by a word, which I never wrote, nor remember to have ever pronounced. And if they are thus faulty, in a language so well known, I am very apprehensive, they may be more so, in one much less studied, and understood. Now, I apprehend, that the passage referred to in the text, should be translated thus; *any that watereth against the wall.*

Whenever

So David received of her hand (saith the text) *that which she had brought him, and said unto her, Go up in peace to thine house; see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy person* *.

The finest spirits are soonest kindled into a flame; and to see them quickly cooled, and calmed again, upon the first shew of submission, by the first gleam of conviction, and raging wrath changed, in one instant, into flowing humanity, and benignity, is the surest test of generosity, and true magnanimity!

It must be owned, that this resolution of *David's*, is not easily acquitted of rashness, and cruelty. However, a good deal may be said to alleviate, if not to remove the guilt of it. He was now, as *Henry of Navarre* used to say of himself, *a king without a kingdom, a husband without a wife, and a soldier without money!* He could not always subsist himself, by the spoils of his enemies: the tyranny of his prince precluded him from subsisting, in any of the ordinary

Whenever any action, or thing, carries any thing offensive in the idea, almost all languages have learned the politeness of expressing that action, by two, or more, different terms: some of which express it without the annexed turpitude, or offence; as others with it: the former, is the language of the better bred, and the latter, of the viler vulgar.

Now I find two words in the *Hebrew* tongue, signifying the necessity of nature, now under consideration, one of these I find, in the mouth of a most accomplished man, to a woman of the same character: and the other, in the mouth of an insolent enemy, to a besieged people, whom he had a mind to affright, with all the horrors, he could crowd into his threats. Therefore, when I find him threatening that people, to reduce them to the distress of feeding upon the necessities of nature, ii *Kings*, 18, 27. I conclude, he meant to express those necessities, in all their horror, and offensive turpitude: And, therefore, of the two words signifying the same necessity, I conclude, that used by *David*, to be the modest, and the decent; and that by *Rabshakeb*, to be the indecent, and offensive. I heartily wish that our translators had learned, and that some people of high station, and equality, would learn, or give a little more attention to this distinction,

* In the original it is, *I have lifted up thy face*;—that is, I have raised thee from a posture of supplication, and granted thy petition.

ordinary ways of other subjects ; and his distinguished merits towards his country, well entitled him to a support from thence. And, besides all this, his particular benefactions to *Nabal*, gave him a peculiar claim to his benevolence. For he had, not only, not injured him in his flocks, and herds, which Mr. *Bayle* would, very unfairly, insinuate to be his whole merit towards *Nabal*, but he had, in truth, protected, and defended his possessions : — *They were a wall unto us* (say his own servants) *both by night, and by day.* (1 Sam. xxv. 16.) They were in a desert, and in the neighbourhood of the *Arabs*, and within the reach even of the *Philistine* incursions ; at least, within those of the *Amalekites*, who made a practice of spoiling the *Israelites*, (1 Sam. xiv. 48.) and, for that reason also, well deserved to be destroyed. And what less could be meant by protecting them, both *by night, and by day*, in such a situation, than protecting them from rapine, from theft, and from wild beasts ? Nor could this be done without much care, and even some hazard of their lives. And had *David*, after all, no right to any part, of all that he had thus preserved, or any reward of any kind ? Were Mr. *Bayle* now alive, I will presume to say, he would scarce venture to expose his ignorance so far, as to answer this question in the negative.

Upon this presumption, I will venture to ask another question ; What was *David* to do in this exigency ? If he suffered this rude refusal, and gross abuse, to go unchastized, he must, of necessity, fall into contempt ; and to be despised, in his circumstances, was to be undone at once.

To be refused, was injury enough. He had a right to be relieved ; and every man, in insuperable necessity, hath so *, at least, every honest man, and

* And, therefore, the case that Mr. *Bayle* puts, of a prince of the blood of *France* out of favour, going about, and raising contributions

and if he cannot obtain this by fair means, he hath a right to use force ; and so the law of nature clearly determines. And, therefore, with great submission, Mr. Bayle, who supposes *David* to have acted, in this point, against the law of nature, and to have had no right to *Nabal's* goods, is very greatly mistaken, and not sufficiently informed in the law of nature ! For *Nabal*, therefore, not only to refuse, but to add reproach to the refusal, reproach, at once so contemptuous, and so injurious, inflamed the indignity to the highest degree ! Fugitive, and slave, are imputations of such united contempt, and contumely ; and when retorted, by ingratitude, upon a guardian, and benefactor, are provocations past bearing.

Add to all this, that *Nabal* was one of those *Zipbites*, that had before betrayed *David* to *Saul*: so his race bespeaks him, and so *Josephus* expressly calls him. In a word, the resolution against *Nabal*, was the resolution of a mortal, not to say a military man, too much injured, and provoked, and urged by necessity, and self-preservation. The change, and the thanksgiving, upon being averted from evil, were the sentiments of a hero, and a saint.

We have an account of a conduct not unlike this, in *Vopiscus's* history of *Aurelian* : when he came to *Tyana*, the city of that poor, vain, impostor, *Apollonius*, and found the gates shut against him, he declared in a rage, that he would not leave a dog alive in it. His soldiers, hearing this declaration, pressed the siege, with more than ordinary vigour : but, however, before it was reduced, it was betrayed, by one of the citizens, into the emperor's hands ;

tributions by military execution, is not fair, nor adequate to this of *David's*, for *Saul* was dethroned by the divine sentence, and *David* actually anointed to the throne. And to suppose, that in that case, he had not a right to necessary subsistence, (from which nothing, but the cruellest tyranny, precluded him) is to suppose as gross an absurdity, as ever was advanced.

hands; who, from an uncommon strain of policy, and generosity, slew the traitor, and spared the city. And when the soldiers, who expected the sackage, and spoil of the place, according to the emperor's declaration, urged him to the execution of it; *I did* (says he) *declare, I would not leave a dog alive here: I command you to kill them all.*

The dignity of this saying, is best estimated by its influence; for we find, it was able to subdue, even, the rapaciousness of a degenerate soldier-spirit. They accepted it instead of spoil: *The whole army* (says the historian) *received it, as if they had been enriched.*

When *Abigail* returned home, she found her husband, in the midst of his revels, and drinking to great excess (turning the medicine into a distemper, as *Pliny* calls *drunkenness*); and, therefore, she took no notice to him of her transaction with *David*, until sleep had restored him to his senses. She then told him of his danger, and, without doubt, painted it in the liveliest colours; at least, if we may judge by the effect, which is thus described in the text:

And it came to pass, in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became as a stone. And it came to pass, about ten days after, that the Lord smote Nabal, that he died. The baseness of his own heart made him believe, *David* incapable of forgiving him, and, therefore, his terror became irremediable.

This extremity of terror, we commonly express by the term of *thunder-struck*; which is finely, and feelingly described by *Ovid*, (*Trist.* l. 1. el. 3.)

*Non aliter stupui, quam qui Jovis ignibus ictus
Vivit, Et est vitæ nescius ipse suæ.*

So was I stunn'd, as one that's thunder-struck!
Who lives; but lives unconscious of his life.

Wo

We have many accounts of men dying through fear of death: but as nothing that we call accidents, or natural causes, excludes the interposition of Providence, in any event; therefore, the Scripture phrase is highly to be justified, and admired, which imputes *Nabal's* death to a stroke from God. A way of thinking, which both *Homer*, and *Virgil* have copied, in two remarkable instances.

When *David* heard, that *Nabal* was dead, he again breaks out into blessings, and thanksgivings to God, that had diverted him from the intended evil: *Blessed be the Lord, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept his servant from evil: for the Lord hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head.*

How fine a document is this to mankind, to remit injuries, to refer themselves, and their concerns to the providence of God, to quell the spirit of revenge, in the haughty heart, and to recede from rash, and wicked resolutions, though backed even by solemn oaths!

When a decent time had intervened, after the death of *Nabal*, *David* sent messengers to *Abigail*, with proposals of marriage; which she accepted with singular humility, and undissembled joy; stranger alike to affected delay, and unvirtuous disguise. In all probability, no such forms obtained in those simpler ages: or, if any did, she had too much good sense, to be enslaved to them.

And she arose, (saith the text) and bowed herself on her face to the earth, and said, Behold, let thine handmaid be a servant, to wash the feet of the servants of my Lord. (Here, we see, she bowed herself to the earth, even to the servants of *David*, in honour of their master; as the houses of parliament uncover, in honour of the king's message.) *And Abigail basted, and arose, and rode upon an ass, with five damsels of hers that*

that went after her ; and she went after the messengers of David, and became his wife.

David had, in all probability, at this time, (I grieve to tell it) another wife, *Abinoam* of *Jesreel*, a city in the south of *Judab*, and neighbourhood of *Carmel*, to whom, it is believed, he was married, before his affiance with *Abigail* *.

Polygamy was a practice prevalent in those ages, from a corrupt interpretation of *Lev. xviii. 18.* and *David*, probably, hoped to strengthen his interest, in his own tribe, by this double alliance ; especially, when he apprehended, it must be considerably weakened, in that of *Benjamin*, by *Michal's* being taken away from him, and bestowed upon *Phaltiel*, the son of *Laiſh*, a *Benjamite*, (which *Saul* did, to take away all his pretensions to the crown from that alliance.) Doubtless, this injury, which *Saul* did him, would have been some excuse, or, to speak more properly, a sufficient justification for *David's* taking another, if he had stopped there, inasmuch as his own wife lived in adultery, and, therefore, might be divorced : but when once he married *Abigail*, he went on, and married more ; for error knows no end.

C H A P. XIX.

David goes into Saul's Camp, in the dead of the Night, with one Companion. What ensued thereupon.

IT should seem, from the preceding accounts of *David's* sojourning among the *Arabs*, and marrying two wives, since his last reconciliation with *Saul*, that there had now been a considerable intermission of his persecution. For he himself complains of his delay among the *Arabs* ; and the multiplying of wives, is a business of leisure, at least, if not of idleness : and, therefore, it is, seemingly, matter of
some

* Because, whenever they are mentioned, *Abinoam* is always named first, 1 *Sam. xxvii. 3.* & *xxx. 5.* 2 *Sam. xxii. 3.* & *ii. 3.*

some wonder, to see commentators, and chronologers crowd all these transactions, and more, into the compass of one year. But, for my own part, since my late better acquaintance with these authors, I have learnt to be less surpris'd, at any instance of their inaccuracy, or incogitancy. They are men, (a very few excepted) who transcribe with great accuracy, and tread with great exactness in the tracks of their predecessors: but as for clearing difficulties, throwing light upon obscurities, or placing events in their natural order, and distance, from the force of genius, and penetration, or intense thinking; he that expects to find much of that amongst them, will find himself much disappointed.

Saul was a young man, when he came to the crown, (1 *Sam.* ix. 2.) and his fourth son was forty years old when he died (2 *Sam.* ii. 10.). He died a king, and his reign was uninterrupted; and yet, some commentators gravely suppose him, to have reigned only two years. And, surely, no man that considers this, will be much surpris'd, to find *David's* long dwelling in the tents of *Kedar*, his marrying two wives in succession, his return to *Zipb*, his subsequent reconciliation to *Saul*, and flight to *Gath*, all crowded into the compass of one year.

However, taking it for granted, that these transactions took up more time than is allowed them, without presuming to determine how much, I shall proceed to consider the three last of them in their order.

The next news we hear of *David*, after his marriage with *Abigail*, is, his being again at *Zipb*, and being again betrayed by the *Zipbites* *.

The

* This account Mr. *Bayle* takes to be the same with that of his being at *Zipb*, ch. xxiii. but without presuming, or, shall I say, vouchsafing to give any reason for his opinion. In this he acted wisely; because I am well satisfied, he could assign no reason for this assertion, that could stand the test of the slightest examination.

When

The numbers he supported, would not allow him to continue long in the same place, and, therefore, he was often obliged to shift for subsistence. And I doubt not, but his long conversation with the *Arabians* taught him how, and when to do this, to greatest advantage.

We do not read of his having been among the *Ziphites*, since their last treachery to him. And if he were not, it is probable, they now dreaded his return, as fearing the effects of his resentment; and, therefore, they informed *Saul* of his retreat.

It is justly, and judiciously observed, that the injured often forgive, but the injurer never: the same malignity of mind, which makes them do an injury, will not suffer them to forgive it; they have no notion, that others have generosity enough to remit, what

When *David* was first at *Ziph*, the *Ziphites* press *Saul* to go against him, with assurances, that they would deliver him into his hands: but before *Saul* could reach him, *David* slipped into the wilderness of *Maon*, and there narrowly escaped, in the manner before related.

At this time, the *Ziphites* barely inform *Saul* of *David's* being in their neighbourhood: they neither press him to go against him, nor do they give him any assurance of delivering *David* into his hands. Not the first; because they might apprehend, that *Saul's* resentment might now be somewhat cooled (as, indeed, it seems to be; for he neither gives them the same thanks. nor is he in the same transport upon their information): Not the second; because they were unsuccessful in their former engagement: they had learnt by experience, that *David* was not so easily to be surprized, or over-reached, as they at first imagined.

In the first account, *David*, as was before noted, shifted quick from *Ziph* to *Maon*: in the second, *David* continues still in *Ziph*, and in *Ziph* surprizes *Saul*, in the midst of his camp.—In the first, *David*, with difficulty, escapes *Saul*: in the second, *Saul* falls into *David's* hands.—In the first, *David* flies from *Maon* to *Engedi*: in the second, from *Ziph* to *Gath*; from whence he no more returned, during the life of *Saul*. In a word, all the material circumstances of time, place, and accidents, antecedent, subsequent, and concomitant, relating to the first expedition, are intirely different from those of the second. And, if all these are not able to countervail the weight of Mr. *Bayle's* *Ipse dixit*; they that are of his opinion, for no better reasons than his authority, are, with great submission, no very free-thinkers.

what they are sure, they themselves never would, in the same circumstances : and, therefore, the injured are always treated by them as irreconcilable enemies, whom the interest of their own safety, obliges them to oppress.

This, in all probability, was now the case of the *Zipbites* ; and, perhaps, if they had not thrown this temptation in his way, *Saul's* reconciliation had continued, longer uninterrupted. His resentment was like embers raked up, (*Suppositos cineri doloso*) which the least rousing kindles anew. His chosen band of 3000 picked men was always in a readiness, and out he issues with them, once more, against *David*, and pitched (*i. e. his camp*) as the text tells us, *1 Sam. xxvi. 3. in the bill of Hachilah, which is before Jeshimon by the way.* *David* had before deceived him, by hiding himself in a defenceless, and unsuspected place, by the side of the high-road ; and *Saul* resolved, he should not play him the same delusion a second time : but he forgot, that *David* was too good a soldier to attempt it ; well knowing, that *Saul* would now be prepared for such a deceit. *David*, therefore, contented himself with retiring, into the recesses of the wilderness, and sending out spies, to observe *Saul's* motions ; and when he had learnt from them, that he was, actually, come out in person, and where he was encamped, he walked up with only two companions, *Abimelech*, the *Hittite*, and *Abishai*, the son of *Zeruiah* (*David's* sister), and brother to *Joab*, to an eminence, from whence he might take a distinct view of *Saul's* camp. And when he had well considered, and examined it, and thoroughly satisfied himself of the very spot, in which *Saul's* tent stood, which was in the very centre of the camp, he asked his companions, which of them *would go down * with him to Saul, and to*

the

* This expression plainly shews, that they were then upon an eminence higher than *Saul's* camp ; for otherwise, as *Saul's* camp was

the camp? *Abisbai* answered, That he would. And, accordingly, when they judged it late, and dark enough for their purpose, they took their way thither.

If it be asked, Why *David* chose to go with one companion, rather than take both?

I answer, That secrecy was now the great point; and *David* thought himself safer, in this respect, with a single companion. Less noise, and accidents would attend on two, than on any greater number. Perhaps too, *Abimelech* was left behind, with directions what measures to take, with *David's* men, in case of an alarm.

When they reached the camp, they found it in a deep quiet; sleep, and silence reigned throughout: so on they passed until they came to the center, where *Saul's* tent stood, (or, as the LXX. understand it, his *chariot* *) and saw him stretched out at his length, fast asleep, with his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster †, and *Abner*, and his other captains lying round him.

VOL. I.

L

Abisbai

was pitched upon an hill, the expression must have been, Who will go up with me?

* The mention of *Saul's* chariot, puts me in mind of that part of the fable of *Pluto*, mentioned by *Panjanias*, that he carried off *Proserpine* in a chariot, with golden reins; from whence he was called χρυσήνιος, *golden-reined*. Subjects take their fashions from the princes. *Saul* clothed the *Israelites* ladies, with scarlet, and gold: it is a fair presumption, that they followed his fashion.

Grotius observes, that princes were anciently wont to repose themselves in their chariots, during their abode in the camp:

† This is much such a picture, as *Silius Italicus* gives us of *Mago*, (the brother of *Hannibal*) in his camp:

----- *Nec degener ille*

Belligeri ritus taurino membra jacebat

Effultus tergo, & mulcebat tristia somno.

Haud procul hasta viri terræ defixa propinquæ, &c.

Sil. Ital. lib. 7, v. 291, & seq.

----- Nor he, degenerate

From martial rites, stretch'd on an ox's hide,

Forgot his cares in sleep; and near him stood,

Fix'd in the ground, his spear, &c.

Though

Abisbai thought this the happiest opportunity that could offer, to rid *David* of his mortal, and implacable enemy, and, therefore, earnestly begged for leave to smite him; assuring him, that he should have no need to repeat his blow: *God* (said he) *bath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now, therefore, let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear, even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him a second time.* But *David*, still steady to his principles, and the generosity of his own heart, absolutely forbade him! *Destroy him not; for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless?* (1 Sam, xxvi. 9.) adding moreover, that his life was in the hand of *God*, who would take him off in his own time, and in the manner he thought best: but, as for himself, the *Lord* forbid, (says he) *that I should stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed.* Upon this, he orders *Abisbai* to take away the spear, and the cruse of water *, which was at *Saul's* bolster, and come away instantly with them. He did so; and they returned, as they came, in still silence through

Though I think the weary, and uncentry'd *Thracians* in *Homer*, give us rather a stronger image of *Saul*, and his camp:

Οἱ δ' εὐδον καμάτῳ ἄδδηνότες, ἔντεα δὲ σφιν

Καλὰ παρ' αὐτοῖσι χθονὶ κέκλιτο εὖ κατὰ κόσμον, &c.

Arriving where the *Thracian* squadrons lay,

And eas'd in sleep the labours of the day,

Rang'd in three lines they view the prostrate band:

The horses yoa' d beside each warrior stand:

Their arms in order on the ground reclin'd;

Through the brown shade the fulgid weapons shin'd;

Amidst lay *Rhæsus*, stretch'd in sleep profound,

And the white steeds behind his charriot bound.

POPE'S HOMER, *Iliad*. 10.

* Some imagine this to be a *clepsydra*, or one of those water watch-measures, used by the ancients in their camps: others, that it was only a vessel of water kept for washing, in case of legal pollutions: and others, that it was laid there for drink, in case of thirst, for which the heat of the season might well create a demand; for it was about the time of sheep-shearing.

through the sleeping ranks, without being seen, or heard of any mortal: *They gat them away*, (says the text) *and no man saw it, nor knew it, neither awaked; for they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from the Lord was upon them.*

Whether any thing supernatural be meant by this expression, of *a deep sleep from the Lord*, (as the best commentators think there is) or the sacred penman used it, only in conformity to the style of the *Hebrews*, who are wont to add the name of God to any thing that is extraordinary, I shall not take upon me to determine.

When *David*, and his companion had gained a considerable distance from the camp, and ascended an eminence opposite to it, (probably, the same, from whence they had before observed it) *David* called out, as loud as he could, to *Abner*, that the king, and the whole camp might hear him, upbraiding him with a failure in his duty, and neglect in guarding the king as he ought *, who, but now, had a narrow escape, inasmuch as there had been one in his camp, with a full purpose to destroy him; a neglect, for which those, who had the care of his sacred person, well deserved to die: — *Art not thou* (says he to *Abner*) *a valiant man? and who is like to thee in Israel? Wherefore then, hast thou not kept thy Lord, the king? For there came one of the people in to destroy the king, thy lord, &c. As the Lord liveth, ye are worthy to die†, because ye have not kept your master, the Lord's anointed. And now see where the spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his bolster.*

Military men, who are the best judges, will, I believe, agree, that this speech is in the true spirit of

L 2

* *Saul* had now the same excuse, that *Philip* urged for himself, for sleeping in his camp: *I slept*, said he, *because I knew Antipater waked.*

† *Epaminondas*, finding a soldier asleep upon his guard, slew him; and defended himself by barely saying, *He left him as he had found him.*

of a good soldier, a brave man, and a faithful subject. The cruse, and the spear were, at once, sufficient proofs of the king's danger, and deliverance: but *David* was above mentioning the author of either; he would not betray his friend, and he scorned to boast himself.

Saul knew *David's* voice; and it is obvious to think, that he could not but know, at the same instant, who was his deliverer. Who could be author of this second, unheard-of generosity, but the author of the first? This generosity, the piety, and magnanimity that govern'd it, and the base, hellish returns that were made to it, crouded into his mind, at once, and overwhelmed him with shame, and sorrow.

In this condition he cried out, *Is this thy voice, my son David? And David answered, It is my voice, my lord, O king!* He then added, (the reader must take it from the original, for I can find no other words to express it by) *Wherefore, doth my Lord thus pursue after his servant? For what have I done? or what evil is in my hand? Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord, the king, hear the words of his servant. If the Lord hath stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering; i. e. if God hath excited you against me, on the score of any guilt, for which I deserve to die; behold, here I am, ready to be sacrificed in atonement for it: but if they be the children of men, cursed be they before the Lord; for they have driven me out this day, from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, saying, Go, serve other gods*. Now, therefore, let my blood fall to the earth before the face of the Lord:*
for

* Driving a man among idolaters, was, in effect, forcing him to become an idolater; and a man's forcing another to be so, was as criminal, as if he were himself an idolater. It is very remarkable, that *David* here laments no present loss, or exclusion from just right; other, than that of being shut out from the divine ordinances, and forced among the worshippers of idols.

for the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains.

This reasoning, this duty, this submission not only softened, but even humbled the haughty, and obdurate heart of Saul; humbled it, if not into a thorough penitent confession, yet, at least, into an open acknowledgment of guilt, and folly: *I have sinned* (says he) *return, my son of David; for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.*

Upon which David desired, he would please to order one of his servants, to come to him, and take back the king's spear; and then added this solemn prayer, and appeal to God: *The Lord render to every man his righteousness, and his faithfulness: for the Lord delivered thee into my hand to day; but I would not stretch forth my hand against the Lord's anointed. And behold, as thy life was much set by, this day, in mine eyes: so let my life be much set by, in the eyes of the Lord, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation.*

After which, Saul concluded with this kind, and prophetick farewell: *Blessed be thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail.*

So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.

CH A P. XX.

Mr. Bayle's Objections, to this part of the Sacred History, considered.

THE reader, who hath been conversant in some late, fashionable writings, will not, I believe, be surprized to find this part of the Sacred History, variously objected to; nor will he, I hope, be displeased to see those objections confuted, and cast down, in their full strength.

In the first place, it is objected, That *David* was at too great a distance for this conversation, which is said to have followed, after the taking away of *Saul's* spear; for the text expressly says, that when he began it, he stood upon the top of an hill, *afar off*.

I answer, 1st, That this expression, *afar off*, may admit of two very plain, and yet, very different senses. *Saul* now stood on the top of one hill, and *David* on the top of another contiguous to it; the distance, then, from *Saul* to *David*, reckoning the descent of one hill, and the ascent of the other, might really be considerable, especially, in a country, where the hills are high, steep, and precipitious, and both the descent, and ascent winding, and difficult, which is the case of *Judea*; and yet, the real distance, in a right line between those summits, very inconsiderable. And this I take to have been the case. *David*, therefore, might, at the same time, be near enough to *Saul* to hear, and to be heard by him; and yet, with regard to the distance, and danger of a pursuit from him, really *afar off*.

I answer, 2^{dly}, That this conversation, as appears from the tenor of the relation, was held in the calm, and silence of the morning; at which time it is almost incredible to say, at what distance the human voice may be heard with clearness, and distinction, especially, in a clear, elastic air, such as that of *Judea*: and it is beyond all doubt, that men have often heard even the crowing of a cock, at a much greater distance, than is necessary to be supposed, in this conference. And yet many of these sounds united, are not equal to the force of one human voice, exerted in all its articulate strength.

The intelligent reader, will, I am sure, gladly save me the trouble of a fuller confutation.

The next objection is of more weight, as it comes from a man of allowed learning, and parts, I mean *Mr. Bayle*. But, perhaps, it may lose some of its weight,

weight, when the reader shall please to consider, that it comes from a great broacher of paradoxes, an industrious dissenter from men of learning, and a known patron of all the errors, that ever obtained in the world from its foundation; a defender even of contrary, and contradictory errors: However, let his reasons, not his authority, be weigh'd in this dispute.

His main objection is, That these accounts of *Saul's* danger, and *David's* generosity, in the cave, and in the camp, are, in reality, but two different relations of one, and the same transaction. And his reasons for believing so, are as follow:

1st, Because the Scriptures make no reflections, in the second relation, upon this repeated ingratitude of *Saul*, in persecuting *David*, after he had before given him his life. And,

2^{dly}, Because the speeches on the second occasion, are pretty near the same with those on the first.

To the first of these objections, I answer; Neither do the scriptures make any reflections upon *Saul's* ingratitude, in first persecuting *David*, after he had saved both him, and his country: Neither do they make any reflections upon his perfidy, and ingratitude, in giving *Michal* to another, after she was solemnly promised to *David*. Does it follow from hence, that there was no such thing as such a promise, and such a prosecution? And yet, it is full as reasonable to expect reflections, in either of these cases, as in the other.

They make no reflections upon *Saul's* perjury, in attempting, so often, upon *David's* life, after he had solemnly sworn to *Jonathan*, that he should not be slain. Are we to believe, therefore, that no such attempts were ever made? And if he attempted upon him, after the first reconciliation, ratified by an oath, why not after the second, and why not after the third, which were not so ratified? And yet, the sacred writers nowhere reflect, that one was the

second reconciliation, and the other the third. When *Saul* darted his spear, a second time, at *David*, the sacred writer no where tells us, to aggravate his ingratitude, that this was the second time, he attempted upon the life of his best benefactor, (the course of the relation sufficiently shewed it to be the second time): nor doth he make any such reflection, even when he attempted him a third time. Shall we then believe the accounts of this second, and third attempt, to be mere forgeries? What wild work would such objections, were they of any weight, make with all the histories of the world, if a deficiency of reflections must infer a deficiency of truth! And, therefore, I shall dismiss this important objection with one plain, obvious observation; That the sacred historians delight not in such reflections, as every reader can make to himself, and naturally arise from the matter before him. They despise such minutenesses; and it is one of their distinguishing characters, that they do. They reserve themselves (as becomes their dignity) for great occasions. And to infer any thing to their disadvantage on this account, is, in truth, to infer strongly to the disadvantage of the human folly, and sufficiency.

It is urged in the next place, (at least, it is insinuated) That *David's* speech, and *Saul's* answer, are much the same, upon both occasions; and, therefore, the occasions are, in reality, but one, and the same.

I answer, That the danger, and the generosity being the same, on both occasions, the sentiments, arising in the heart, must be, in a great part, the same on both. And yet, whoever reads them, will find variety enough, to characterize, and distinguish them by.

In the first, *David* calls only to the king, because he had only to do with him: in the second, he calls first to the people; and then to *Abner*, and reproaches him, with neglect in guarding his prince: nor does
he

he address himself to the king, 'till the king first calls to him. In the first, *Saul*, struck with *David's* generosity, lift up his voice and wept, but without any confession, either of guilt, or folly: in the second, he confesses both, but without weeping.— In the first, the impresson of *David's* generosity, a thing new, and unheard-of, had its natural effect: there was no striking novelty, or surprize in the second; *Saul* was prepared for it. But, at the same time, that nature had less to do on this occasion, reason had more: his whole army were now, a second time, witnesses of *David's* generosity; there was a necessity of saying something to satisfy them; and what less could satisfy them, than a general confession of folly, and guilt? and that he makes.

Again: In the first, *Saul*, convinced, that, *David* would, one day, come to the crown, intercedèd for his posterity; and exacts an oath from *David*, that he would not cut them off. This was the most important, and interesting part of the whole conference. If these are but different relations of the same conference, it is strange, how the most material, and concerning part of the whole should be left out in the last account. But the truth is, this point being fix'd by *Saul*, in the first conference, there was no need of repeating it in the second.

But suppose our accounts of both conferences were, in substance, the same; would it follow, that the occasions were not different? *Livy* tells us, that when *Manlius* was prosecuted by the tribunes, for affecting to make himself greater, than was consistent with the freedom of the commonwealth, he defended himself, by applying to the passions of the people; pointing to the capitol, and painting the deliverance, he had wrought for them there; and that he did this several times, and the appeal always had its effect. Suppose these speeches had been preserved, and found in substance the same; would any reader, of common sense, infer, that, in reality, he

had

had never made but one speech ? and that those relations left, of his having spoken them at different times, were nothing but forgery, and delusion ?

But should not *Saul* have owned, that this was the second instance of *David's* generosity to him ? that it was the second time, that he owed him his life ? And if he had done so, *Mr. Bayle* had been satisfied ; — that is, if *Saul* had had that ingenuity, which a generous spirit should have, *Mr. Bayle* would have believed the truth of the sacred history. Perhaps, *he* would : but, possibly, others would rather disbelieve it on that account. Are generosity, and ingenuity any parts of *Saul's* character ? And did any history ever lose credit, by representing persons in character ! or gain any, by drawing them out of character ! Does not *Saul* do, as much as could be expected, from a man of his complexion ? black, saturnine ; ungrateful, envious, proud ! *I have sinned* (says he) : *return, my son David ; for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day :— Behold, I have played the fool ; I have erred exceedingly.* Had *Saul* been a man of an ingenuous spirit, his confession had, doubtless, been more explicit, and aggravated ; whereas, it is now the direct contrary : the guilt gradually alleviated, and diminished almost to nothing : first it is *sin* ; — then it is *folly* ; — and, lastly, it is *error*. — But, however, error as it was, it was error in excess ; and that, surely, must, at least, imply degrees, and repetition. Were the sin, the folly, and the error, all but one act ? Besides all this, though *Saul* had not ingenuity enough, to make an explicit confession of *David's* repeated generosity to him, yet it is fully implied, where he tells him, that he shall both do great things, *and still prevail* ; *i. e.* as he had prevailed over him before, so he should always.

But, it seems, *David* himself does not so much as hint, that this was the second time, that he had given *Saul* his life. I own, he does not : and I

own, I believe, Mr. *Bayle* thought *he* would, had he been in *David's* place. And I shall take leave to answer him, as a great poet of the last age, did to a very lively objector, on another occasion *: *I believe, Sir, you would: but then, Sir, you will please to remember, that you are no hero.* The man, that could have the greatness of soul, to save his enemy twice, was not capable of the littleness of upbraiding him with it. *David's* two points seem to be these; to take no merit to himself, from his generosity, and to impute no demerit to *Saul*, from his baseness. As to the first, the reader will plainly perceive, that, when he mentions the king's danger, he carefully avoids the least hint, of his having any merit, in saving his life.—And, as to the second, he is industrious to remove all suspicion, of his charging *Saul* with any guilt, upon his own score, and to place the persecution, to the score of his own demerit, which moved God to excite *Saul* against him; or, at worst, to the score of those evil counsellors, whose advice forced him away from the inheritance of God. He avoids, with great delicacy, and address, so much as the mention, or least hint of his own merit towards him, 'till *Saul's* shameful diminution of his guilt, extorted a very slight, and modest remembrance of it: and, even then, he says not, that he saved his life; but barely, that he abstained from taking it away; and, that it was much set by in his eyes. In a word, nothing can be conceived more truly generous, and heroic, than *David's* whole conduct upon this head.

In the last place, Mr. *Bayle* tells us, That if he saw two narratives of this nature, either in *Ælian*, or *Valerius Maximus*, he should make no difficulty to

* A young gentleman objected to Mr. *Dryden*, that his *Spartan Hero* was too cold, and insensible to the addresses of the *Egyptian* queen; adding, that he was sure, he should not be so, were he in *Cleomenes's* place. *I believe so too*, says Mr. *Dryden*: but pray, Sir, please to remember, that you are no hero.

to believe, that it was one, and the same fact ; which, being related different ways, served for the subject of different articles, or chapters.

That is, if Mr. *Bayle* had found two narratives of this kind, in scrap-collectors, in the compilers of patch-work, unconnected histories, that had no relation to one another, he would make no difficulty to conclude, they related to one fact, &c. And, therefore, he will conclude the same, when he finds them set down in their order of time, and place ; and with all possible marks, and characters of distinction, in one of the most orderly, regular, well-deduced histories that ever was penned.

If the admirers of Mr. *Bayle* can find any complacency, either in clearness of this reasoning, or in the candour, or ingenuity that conduct it ; I will venture to say, their enemies have nothing worse to wish them.

I will not presume to say, that there is such a minute detail, and connexion of events, in the books of *Samuel*, as in those of *Livy*, or *Thucydides* (God forbid there should !) : but are they, for that reason, as unconnected, as those of *Ælian*, or *Valerius Maximus* ?

If this be candour, what is chicanery ?

Let us now consider the facts, in their historical order of time, and place.

The adventure of the cave was soon after *Saul*'s return, from repelling the *Philistine* invasion, which delivered *David* out of his hands (1 *Sam.* xxiv.). It was in the day, in a cave, at the foot of the mountains of *Engedi*. *Saul* was alone in the cave, and *David* had all his men about him : and the proof of his having had *Saul* in his power, was, the skirt of his robe : it was before *David* went to *Paran*, and before he married *Abigail*.

The adventure of the camp was, by the lowest computation, one year later ; it was in the wilderness of *Ziph*, thirty miles distant from *Engedi*, in a
camp,

camp, on a hill, by night. *David*, attended but with one companion, and *Saul*, in the center of his whole army; and *David's* proof of having him in his power, his spear, and cruse of water, taken from his bolster. It was after *David's* marriage with *Abigail*, and just before his final departure to *Gath*; from whence he returned no more, until after *Saul's* death. And the conference shews, that he was then determined to leave the land; *They have driven me out* (saith he) *this day, from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord.* He was now reduc'd to this last resource; and that was, absolutely to quit his country, and go amongst infidels. If Mr. *Boyle* had attended to this very distressful, and very remarkable circumstance, he would have found this second adventure, sufficiently distinguished by it from the first.

I cannot quit this head, without observing, once more, upon the singular politeness, and refinement of this expostulation; in which, *David* carefully avoids all appearance of reproach, or censure upon his prince, and charges the whole odium of his persecution, upon the influence of his evil advisers.

I will only add, that the battles of *Iffus*, and *Arbela*, or of *Cressi*, and *Agencourt*, have not more, or clearer marks of distinction, than these two adventures. And if, after all, they are one, and the same; what criterion is there, or can there be, of any one historical truth, from the foundation of the world?

Calumniate boldly, (says the proverb) *and something will stick.* Modern infidels, not contented with adopting this maxim, have added another to it: *Contradict boldly, and somebody will believe it.*

C H A P. XXI.

David flies to Achish, king of Gath; from thence he removes to Ziklag. Mr. Bayle's Censure of his Conduct there.

AND now *David*, weary of wandering, weary of struggling with *Saul's* implacable spirit, weary of the unequal Conflict, between too dangerous generosity, and too relentless malice; weary of subsisting by the spoils of his enemies, or bounty of his friends; and, probably, since the affair of *Nabal*, in terror of too much resenting their neglects, resolves, at last, to quit his country, and throw himself, once more, under the protection of his enemies.

This, I think, hath always been the resource of great subjects in distress. This drove *Themistocles* to *Perfia*, and *Alcibiades* to *Sparta*. And though I will not take upon me to justify a criminal subject, in this conduct; yet, an innocent man, such as *David*, I think, I well may; especially, when he hath tried all means of reconciliation, and justification, and all other methods of subsistence, and finds no security but in this. It would otherwise follow, that every good man was tamely to give up his life, to every caprice of a merciless tyrant: a principle, which, I believe, no wise, and good man, will venture to advance.

However, this resolution of *David's* is, I think, universally censured by the commentators, on account of his neglecting to consult God, either by his priest, or by his prophet, before he fixed upon it. God had commanded him before to go into the land of *Judab* (1 *Sam.* xxii. 5.). And, surely, he should not have left that, to go into a heathen country, without a like, divine command, or, at least, permission. And, therefore, most writers ascribe this resolution to want of grace, and a proper confidence, in the protection of that God, who had so often,

often, and so signally delivered him, in the greatest exigencies. And, I own, I cannot help concurring with them. And, indeed, it must be allowed to be the resolution of a mere man, governed by motives merely human : *He said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul : there is nothing better for me, than that I should speedily escape, into the land of the Philistines ; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more, in any coast of Israel : so shall I escape out of his hand.* This is a natural painting of what passes in the anxious heart, oppressed with difficulties, casting about, and considering every way to escape, and, at last, resolving upon what appears the properest.

The truth is, he was now in a distressful *dilemma* ; either to stay at home, in perpetual dread, and hazard of his life, or take refuge among idolaters, where they could not bear the free exercise of his religion, nor he the abominations of theirs.

Besides all this, his only prospect of human protection, was from the enemies of his country. To owe his safety to the enemies of his country ! perhaps, be forced to join them against his country !—to be confederate with heathens against *Israel* ! how grievous must this be to his godly, and patriot spirit ! This, surely, was a difficulty, that called for the divine aid.

Josephus tells us, what is very natural to believe, that he advised with his friends upon the matter. And, doubtless, it was not until he had their consent, that *he arose* (as the text tells us he did) *and passed over, with the six hundred men that were with him, unto Achish, the son of Maach, king of Gath.*

Josephus tells us, that he advised with his friends, on this occasion : but no writer informs us, that he advised with God. And I am afraid, this is too often the case of the best men, (I beg the unserious reader's pardon for the reflection) to advise with their friends, and with their own hearts, and leave

God

GOD out of their consultations, by neglecting to implore his aid, and direction.

As to *David*, one would imagine that the danger he ran before, in the same place, from the same fundamental error, should have taught him better: but, in all probability, he contented himself with stipulating for protection, maintenance, &c. at this time, which he had before neglected.

Most writers agree, that this *Achish*, to whom *David* now fled, was not the *Achish*, by whom he was so unhospitably received, and from whom he so narrowly escaped, when he was before at *Gath*. And, indeed, I think, his being here called *Achish*, the son of *Maach*, sufficiently implies him to have been another person; for those words can, in the nature of the thing, have no use, but to distinguish this *Achish*, from another of the same name. And, indeed, this *Achish* seems as well distinguished from the other, by the rest of his character, as by that of the son of *Maach*.

But this, by the way, is a fair proof, that this book was written at the time, that it is said to have been written; inasmuch as this distinction was information enough, to the people of that age, but could neither be given, or received as such, either by any writer, or reader of any subsequent age *

The kindness, with which *Achish* received *David*, is best estimated by the effects: he lodged him, and his men, with their wives, and households, in the royal city at *Gath*; until *David*, thinking himself, and

* And therefore, though this character no way informs me, who this *Achish* was, whether a brother, a son, or even of the same family with the *Achish* before-mentioned; yet I may, fairly, conclude, that the note was added to distinguish him from some other. I am satisfied, it was a sufficient mark of distinction of this *Achish* from all others, when it was set down: but to us, at this distance, it can be no mark of distinction, but of this *Achish* from one other; that other being the only *Achish*, we hitherto hear of, except this:—nor can I believe, it was inserted in vain, even with regard to us.

and his followers too burdensom to his benefactor, where the royal residence greatly increased the expence of his support; or, perhaps, finding himself less at liberty there, to exercise the forms, and duties of his religion; and, it may be, often vexed, as *Lot* was in *Sodom*, with the conversation of the ungodly; he desired to be removed, to some place of more retirement: which was accordingly granted, and *Zicklag*, on the frontiers of *Judah*, appointed for his reception, and put wholly into his power. Which, surely, was not an ill-judged trust: there was no doubt of *David's* defending it, the best he could, against his mortal enemy.

When *Saul* heard, that *David* was fled to *Gath*, he despaired of getting him into his power, as *David* foresaw he would, and so gave over a further search of him.

To *David* at *Zicklag*, many of his friends resorted, and among them, several considerable men of *Saul's* own tribe, and kindred; twenty-two captains, of great distinction, are numbered by name, whom the Scriptures describe as very valiant, and expert warriors: *They were armed with bows, (saith the text) and could use both the right-hand, and the left, in hurling stones, and shooting arrows out of a bow.* They saw *David* now in safety, and they thought they might be so too, in declaring for him. It was now no secret, that *Samuel* had, long since, anointed him to the throne; or, that *Jonathan* had, long since, resigned his pretensions to him. *Saul* was disturbed with evil passions, in the decline, and not to be depended upon. *David* was the great hope, and stay of the kingdom, and it was natural to turn their eyes upon him. To declare early for him, was the sure way to engage his favour; and the only one, that could obliterate the remembrance of their enmity, which had made him an exile, and an outlaw.

In this city of *Zicklag*, *David* resided a full year, and four months; and, as it was a frontier of little

strength, and, of consequence, much exposed to incursions, and ravages, it is not probable, that *David* could derive any great advantages towards his support, from the product of the place, whose name some criticks have derived from its necessities * : and, therefore, since he would not be burdensome to the king, (and, surely, it were very ill judged to be so) he had no way to subsist, but by depredations ; and his patriot spirit soon prompted him to subsist, rather at the expence of his enemies, than his friends ; and, at the same time, to consider the enemies of his country, as his own.

There were yet some remains of the *Amorites*, and other ancient inhabitants of the country ; whom God, for their inveterate, and incorrigible wickedness, had commanded to be extirpated : and, in destroying these, he might at once obey God, rid the world of a pest, subsist himself, serve his country, and not injure his benefactor.

These considerations quickly determined him : and, therefore, as long as he continued in that country, he employed himself in continual ravages upon those miscreants : and took his measures so well, that whatever quarter he invaded, he utterly destroyed : (as *Livy* says of *Martius*) *Ne nuntios quidem cladis reliquit* ; He left no body behind him, to complain of the calamity.

Mr. *Bayle* censures this conduct ; and says, it was unjustifiable in *David*, being a private man, to act thus, without a warrant from *Achish*, or from God ; he had no warrant from *Achish*, for he acted contrary to his intentions ; nor from any prophet ; nor from inspiration ; because the Scriptures are silent upon this head.

The reader will please to observe, that all Mr. *Bayle's* reasonings against *David*, are grounded upon one fundamental error ; and that is, that he acted, in all his exile, merely, as a private man. He forgets,

* Scicileg. *Angustia Sexturii*, saith *Pagnin*.

forgets, that he was elected, and anointed to the kingdom; and that the same Spirit of God, which once inspired *Saul* with all regal virtues, was now gone over to *David*, and rested with him. And it were very strange, if *David*, as a king-elect of *Israel*, could have any guilt, in doing that, which *Saul*, as a king in possession, was deposed for not doing.

But the Scriptures are silent upon the point; and, therefore, he was guilty.—

This, sure, is easily retorted: The Scriptures are silent, as to any guilt of his upon this head; and, therefore, he was not guilty.

I might add, That the Scriptures acquit him of all deliberate, known, executed guilt, except in the matter of *Uriah*.

And, as to a commission from *Achish*, Mr. Bayle forgets, that *David* waited upon *Achish*, after his return from his incursions, to give him an account of them, and present him with the spoil. Does not this plainly imply his permission, and authority, to make incursions? The spoil he brought to *Gath*; but the people he did not: because, if he had, it would soon have been known, that they were not *Jews* (1 Sam. xxvii. 11.): *And David saved neither man, nor woman alive, to bring to Gath, saying, Lest they should tell on us, &c.* a text, which hath been strangely misunderstood, by the interposition of the word *tidings* *, which entirely perverts the sense of it. For if he had spared them, it was not easy for them to carry any intelligence, of what was done to *Gath*; since the whole tribe of *Judah* lay between the *Philistines*, and those regions which he wasted.

The spoil of oxen, asses, and camels, *David* (as I now observed) constantly brought to *Achish*; and, it is to be presumed, submitted them to his disposal:

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and,

* In the *English* translation it is, *to bring tidings to Gath*: whereas, in the original, it is, *he saved neither man, or woman alive, to bring to Gath*.

and, therefore, supposing the people, so destroyed, in no alliance with *Achish*, *David* was, thus far, rather beneficent, than injurious to his protector. And it is certain, that there is no sort of reason, to believe them in alliance with him, but quite the contrary.

But it is urged, and aggravated, that *David* deceived his benefactor, and made him believe, that the persons, so ravaged, and destroyed, were *Israelites*.

I own he did : but let the reasons why he did so, be calmly, and candidly considered.

Achish wanted to be assured of *David's* inviolable attachment to him : and nothing could give him so effectual an assurance of that, as the enmity of his own countrymen.

Now *David*, who knew his own integrity, and knew himself to be faithful to his benefactor, knew, that this proof of it was not necessary, nor would any way advance the king's interest ; and, therefore, thought, he might make use of an innocent deception, to inspire *Achish* with all the assurance, and confidence in him, that he desired, and *David* deserved.

I will not stand up in a strict defence of this conduct. It was indeed a deception : but if it injured nobody, (as I apprehend it did not) I must own, I am utterly at a loss, what degree of guilt to charge upon it.

This must be allowed, that all habits of deception, have a natural tendency to bias the mind, and warp it from truth ; and, therefore, ought carefully to be avoided, even, where the deception is innocent.

And there is this further presumption against them, that we often find them attended with evil consequences, as in the present case ; for we find, that this deception inspired *Achish*, with such a confidence of *David's* inviolable attachment to him, as determined him, to make him captain of his life-guard.

C H A P.

C H A P. XXII.

The Philistines engage in a new War, against Saul. David invited to it. Saul's Adventure with the Pythoness, at Endor.

THE *Philistines*, recruited about this time, as *Sir Isaac Newton* judges, by vast numbers of men, driven out of *Egypt* by *Amosis*, resolve upon a new war with *Israel*. Nor were *Samuel's* death, and *David's* disgrace (as we may well judge) inconsiderable motives to it.

Achish knew *David's* merit, and had a thorough confidence in his fidelity, and, therefore, resolved to take him with him to the war. Accordingly, he moved the matter to *David*; and *David*, as commentators think, made him a doubtful answer. The most probable opinion is, that he would not resolve, upon so extraordinary a step, without consulting God, either by his priest, or his prophet. And, therefore, when *Achish* told him, He must go with him to battle; he only answered, *Surely, thou shalt know what thy servant can do*. Upon which *Achish* replied, *Therefore, will I make thee keeper of mine bead for ever*; that is, in the present military style, he promised to make him captain of his life-guard; and we find, by the sequel, that he did accordingly.

Since, then, we find *David* proceed so far, as to attend *Achish* to *Apheck*, the place appointed for the assembling of the *Philistine* forces; I think, there is no reason to doubt, that he went thither, with honest intentions towards his protector; and that he did this by the divine permission.

Now, forasmuch as the event of this war, turned upon a remarkable piece of misconduct in *Saul*, as a captain; and a grievous, and deliberate violation of his known duty to God, as his Creator, and his King; the sacred historian here interrupts the course of his relation, to acquaint us with that event, and,

in order to it, acquaints us with the situation of both armies. At that time, *Saul* encamped upon mount *Gilboa* ; and the *Philistines*, in full prospect under him, upon the plains of *Sunem*.

When *Saul* saw their numbers, their order, and their appointments, he judged himself greatly overpowered, and fell into great terror upon the prospect. What should he do ! *Samuel* was dead, and *Abiathar* with *David*. He had, for some years past, shewn no regard, or, to speak more justly, shewn all imaginable disregard to religion. His pride had lifted him up above his duty ; he had said in his heart, *There is no God* : but, now, his fears had got the better of his infidelity. He then, too late, had recourse to God for aid. He had massacred the priests of God at *Nob*, all but one ; and that one was gone away to *David*, with the *ephod*. He applied himself to some other priest. And since he consulted God by *Urim*, it is evident, that he had also gotten another *ephod* made ; not considering the peculiar sanctity of the first, or that God would confine his manifestations of himself to that, which was of his own appointment. At least, *Saul* had no reason to hope, that God should exhibit himself, in any extraordinary manner, in his favour. *Samuel* was dead, and *Gad* was with *David* ; and we hear of no other, on whom the Spirit of God rested, in those days. However, he applied himself to some of the prophetick colleges, probably, to some of the most eminent of those sons of the prophets, he had seen at *Ramah* ; but to no purpose : God refused to answer him, either by *Urim*, by prophets, or by dreams.

What should he do ! The heart of man is fond of prying into futurity, and more especially, upon the edge of great events. In great dangers, men are desirous even to know the worst ; it is some consolation, to be prepared for it. He had, long since, renounced every thing, that was serious in religion.

religion: However, he had been threatened as from God; and, in all probability, the time was now come, when the sentence, so long since pronounced upon him, was to be executed: could he but see *Samuel*, he should know all! It was said, there were men who had power over spirits. Who knows, how far that power might extend! God had forsaken him; he could be no worse on that side; he might be better on some other; he resolved to try.

Infidelity is nearly allied to superstition. To disbelieve upon fair evidence, and to believe without any, arraigns the mind of equal infirmity. The most infidel man, I ever conversed with, was, by the accounts of those who best knew him, the most superstitious.

Saul had prayed to God to no purpose; he now resolved to apply himself to *Samuel*: and I think it evident from the text, that he actually prayed to him; but had yet no answer. What will not fear, and folly force us to? he; who, but a few hours before, was too haughty, to profess himself the servant of the living God, is now the slave of his own fears, and follies.

Saul had, in the days of his devotion, partly cut off, and partly frightened away, those wizards, and forcerers; those execrable wretches, the pests of society, and enemies of true religion, whom God commanded to be extirpated*.

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some

* Those who think such wretches can do no mischief, and, therefore, ought not to be punished, are, with great submission, much mistaken. For, supposing their charms utterly ineffectual, to their intended, or pretended purposes; yet, is there no evil in using charms, and incantations to wicked ends? invoking evil spirits, reversing their prayers, renouncing their God, and committing themselves, as far as in them lies, to the dominion of hell! If they seriously intend what they profess, are such wretches fit to live? And if they mean only to delude, and seduce others into a confidence, and trust, in those evil arts, can there be greater enemies

some of them might have remained, or returned : he enquired ; and was informed (princes never want ministers of mischief) of a *Pythonefs*, that dwelt not far off, at *Endor*. His anxiety would let him think of nothing else ; he could neither eat, nor drink, until it was done. To *Endor* he hies that very night, stript of his regal apparel, and disguised as well as he could, and attended only by two companions. When he arrived, he prayed the woman to divine to him, by her familiar spirit, and to bring him up, whom he should name to her. She answered, That he knew very well, *Saul* had cut off all those of that profession ; and why should he go about to lay such a snare for her, to have her destroyed ? He replied with a solemn oath, by the living God, That no evil should happen to her, upon that account. She then demanded, whom he would have raised ? He answered, *Samuel*. And the

enemies to society ? What can more mischief mankind, than taking off their minds from virtue, from honest industry, and from trust in the divine goodness, for success in our honest endeavours ?

I am far from wishing to see every poor, wrong-headed, splenetic, vapourish creature, that fancies she can fly, or feeds upon imaginary feasts, tortured, and tried for a witch : they are objects of pity ; and I should wish to see them put under the care of a good physician, and supplied with proper medicines, and real food. But if there be any, who either labour to become witches by evil arts, or labour to delude others, to trust, and confidence in them, I think, no punishment can be too heavy for such miscreants.

I have often wondered, and lamented, that christian law-givers were not more attentive to the laws of God, and more governed by them in their decisions. This I am sure of, they can never err after that pattern ; and whenever they swerve, or depart from it, they will depart so far from fit, and right, and wise, and just. And, therefore, although I can, with a safe conscience, declare to the whole world, that I have as little faith in witches, as the learned author of the *Discourse on Witchcraft*, occasioned by a bill, then depending in parliament, for the repeal of some statutes about *Witchcraft* (*London*, printed in 1736) ; yet, I differ entirely from him, both in relation to his opinion of this history, and in relation to the wisdom of an unlimited repeal of all such statutes.

the instant he pronounced his name *, the woman saw *Samuel*, and shrieked out loud, in terror, and surprize; and soon after asked the king, why he had deceived her; for he was *Saul*? She saw an apparition she did not expect; she knew the prophet; she knew the veneration *Saul* had for him; she knew, that prophets were only sent to kings: and knew the poor, deluded mortals, she had to do with, had no notion of having any commerce, with persons of sacred character; and she knew her art, whatever that was, had never exhibited a person of that figure to her.

When the king heard her cry out, in such terror, he bad her not be afraid, and asked her what she saw? She answered, That she saw *gods*, (or, as the word may be translated, *lords*) ascending out of the earth. *Saul* then enquired after his form; and she told him, it was that of an old man, cover'd with a mantle. The text then immediately adds, that *Saul perceived, that it was Samuel himself; and stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself.*

The narration is short, and uncircumstantial: but, as I humbly apprehend, the matter was thus:

Saul, to prevent all delusion, would not tell the *Pythonefs*, whom he would have raised, until he brought her to the very cell †, or place of her incantations; and then he told her, he would have *Samuel* called up to him. And the instant he said this, she, looking into her cell, saw *Samuel*; and seeing him, so unexpectedly, and without the aid of her

* Here *English* translators have inserted the particle *when*: And *when the woman saw Samuel*. Which would imply, that some space of time had passed between *Saul's* request, and the appearance of *Samuel*. —Whereas the original text stands thus: When *Saul* said, *Bring me up Samuel*, then immediately follows, —*And the woman saw Samuel, and cry'd, &c.*

† For, I believe, it can be no doubt, that persons of that character had, all, places peculiarly set apart for those accursed rites; and we have reason to believe, from the xxixth of *Isaiab*, ver. 4. that they were caverns, or cells under-ground.

her art, she was affrighted, and cried out : and the king, upon enquiry, hearing that it was an old man with a mantle, believed it was *Samuel* she saw ; and straightway going to the cell, and perceiving * the prophet, did him obeisance. Immediately *Samuel* asked him, why he had disquieted him, to bring him up ? (Will not this ground a presumption, that the *Pythonefs* had not disturbed him by her incantations ? for, if she had, the question had been more naturally directed to her). To which *Saul* answered, That he was sore distressed ; for the *Philistines* warred against him ; and God had forsaken him, and would neither answer him by dreams, nor prophets : *Therefore*, (says he) *I have called unto thee †, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do.*

Then said Samuel, Wherefore, then, dost thou ask of me ; seeing the Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy ? And the Lord hath done for himself, as he spake by me ; for the Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it unto thy neighbour, even unto David : because thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek : therefore, hath the Lord done this thing unto thee, this day.

In this we see the prophet foretels, that *Saul* should, that day, be stript of the kingdom ; and that the kingdom should be divided, and given to *David*. Then follows, what nothing but infinite, and unerring prescience could predict ; an exact, minute, precise account of all the circumstances, of the then depending event : *Moreover, the Lord will also deliver Israel, with thee, unto the Philistines ; and to-morrow shalt thou, and thy sons, be with me : and also*

* The original word signifies *knowing*, and sometimes *seeing*.

† *Saul* expresses himself here in the same terms, that *David* makes use of, to signify his praying to God. Which persuades me, that *Saul* invoked him, as some deluded christians do saints, and angels.

also the camp of Israel, shall the Lord deliver into the band of the Philistines.

I own, I am astonished at the inattention, (shall I call it?) or impiety, or both, of those criticks, and commentators, who could ascribe this prediction to the sagacity of an impostor, or even of the devil. I shall take a proper time to refute them; and, in the mean time, go on with my history.

When *Saul* heard this dreadful sentence, pronounced upon himself, his family, and his people, the terror of it struck him to the heart; and he hastened to get away from that fatal place: but as he went, his fears operating upon a mind weakened with guilt, and upon a body exhausted with fatigue, and fasting, he lost all power of motion, and fell, at his full length, upon the floor. The woman seeing this, ran up to him, and, finding the distressed, and weak condition he was in, endeavoured to persuade him, as well as she could, to take some sustenance: which he absolutely refused. Then, calling his servants to her aid, they all, in a manner, compelled him to consent: *So he arose from the earth, and sat upon the bed. And the woman had a fat calf in the house, and she basted, and killed it; and took flour, and kneaded it, and did bake unleavened bread thereof; and she brought it before Saul, and before his servants, and they did eat. Then they rose up, and went away that night.*

What remorse, what despair, what desolation of mind, what horrors of guilt, what terrors, and anticipations of divine vengeance, haunted him by the way; may no reader of this history, ever learn from his own experience!

C H A P. XXIII.

Other Opinions upon this Head examined.

I FIND many learned men of a different opinion from me, in relation to the reality of *Samuel's* appearance, on this occasion : some imagining, that it was an evil spirit, that now appeared unto *Saul*; and others, that the whole was the work of imposture.

I shall give my reasons; and the reader will judge for himself.

In the first place, then, I readily agree with one party of those, that differ from me, that neither this *Pythonefs*, nor all the devils in hell, could raise up *Samuel*; nor is there one tittle in the whole narration, to support, or countenance such a persuasion: but I differ entirely from them, in supposing all this the work of a juggler.

1st, Because, I can see nothing ascribed, in this relation, to *Samuel*, which is not entirely out of character in an impostor, or absolutely out of the power of the subtlest impostor, that ever lived. And,

2^{dly}, Because, I have as good an opinion of the author of this history, his ability, his integrity, his knowledge of what he wrote about, his undesigning to deceive, as I can have of any man, that ever commented, or criticised upon it: and, therefore, when he gives me to understand, that the woman saw *Samuel*, I absolutely believe that she did.

Allow, that the Scripture speaks of things according to their appearances, and that *Saul*, and his companions, might be deceived by an impostor in *Samuel's* guise; Was this author deceived, or did he mean to deceive me, when he gives me to understand, that *the woman saw Samuel*, and was frightened at the sight?

Suppose a possibility, and his companions, could be imposed upon, by an impostor, on this occasion;
yet,

yet, surely, the highest probability is on the other side. *Saul* was far from having an implicit faith, even in *Samuel*, although the manner of his coming to the kingdom, demonstrated the divinity of the prophet's mission. And would he, easily, be the dupe of a silly woman! He was perfectly acquainted with the voice, stature, and figure of *Samuel*. He was a brave man; and, doubtless, his companions were so. Can we doubt, whether he chose two of his old tried friends, on this occasion? And, if he did, they also must have been acquainted with *Samuel*. They came upon the woman by night, and unprepared. Had they allowed her the least time for juggle, or artifice, or suffered her, so much as one moment, out of their sight; would a sacred historian, whose business it was to expose these practices, as far as truth would allow, omit these circumstances? Would he omit all mention of the preceding sacrifices, and incantations? Would he omit every circumstance, that tended to detect the fraud? Would he omit every thing, that tended to shew it to be fraud, and insert every thing, that tended to imply the real appearance of the prophet?

Shall this author relate, in plain terms, that *Saul perceived it was Samuel himself* *? and shall he relate this, by a word which signifies either certain knowledge, experience, or sensible perception? and are we to understand by this word, (contrary to all the rules of grammar, and rational interpretation) that he neither knew, nor had sensible evidence of this? that he only imagined it was *Samuel*, by the description of an impostor? a description, that would suit ten thousand other men, as well as *Samuel*!

But the text says not, that *Saul* saw *Samuel*.

True:

* It is astonishing, that the *English* translation should leave out this last word, *himself*.

True: but it tells us something, that plainly implies it, that *he stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himself.*

When *Jacob* met *Esau*, (*Gen. xxxiii.*) the text tells us, that the *handmaids, and Leah, and Rachel, and their children, bowed themselves*; the sacred penman does not tell us, that they saw *Esau*, or that it was to him they bowed. Are we to believe, for this reason, that they did not see him? or did not bow to him, upon seeing him?

When *David* arose out of the hiding-place, upon the signal that *Jonathan* gave him, the text tells us (*1 Sam. xx. 41.*), that *he fell upon his face to the ground, and bowed himself*; the text tells us not, either that he saw *Jonathan*, or bowed to *Jonathan*. Does any man doubt, for that reason, that he did not see him? or did not bow to him, because he saw him?

When the messenger from *Saul's* camp, came to *David* at *Zicklag*, the text tells us, that *he fell to the earth, and did obeysance* *. There is no mention either of his seeing *David*, or bowing to him. Are we to doubt, for that reason, whether he did see him? It were easy to add other instances. When the sacred writers express themselves, in the same style, and in the very same words, on occurrences of the same kind, such as the behaviour of people, upon occasion of seeing some extraordinary person; Are we not to understand them in the same sense?

The text is still stronger, and fuller in this place. It first says, that *Saul knew that it was Samuel himself*; and then adds, that *he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself*. Must we believe, notwithstanding all this, that he neither knew, nor saw what he bowed to? that he bowed only to a creature of

* The same word is here rendered, *did obeysance*: which, in this action of *Saul's*, is translated, *bowed himself*; and, in the margin of *Pagnin's Bible*, is translated, *adored*.

of the *Pythonefs's* imagination * ? What strange suppositions are these ! and what violence must we do to the sacred text, to the analogy of scripture, to common grammar, and to common sense, to gratify some dogmatick doubters † !

But *Saul* was frightened out of his wits, and did not know what he said, or did.

I am very much inclined to think, that they, who surmise this, believe it.

But, pray, how does it appear ? The gentlemen, that object thus, have not, perhaps, considered, that *Saul* desired *Samuel* to be raised up to him ‡, (not to the *Pythonefs*) ; which plainly shews, that he had no apprehension of fear, from the thoughts of seeing him. And when the woman was frightened, and shrieked at the sight of *Samuel*, it is plain, that *Saul* was not ; for he bids her not be afraid || ; and desires

* But some think, this must be an evil spirit, because he does not reprove *Saul* for doing him obeysance. The truth is, such observers are scarce worth regarding ; since this was, undoubtedly, no more than a civil salutation.

† I mean here to censure those only, who think their doubting a sufficient reason, why others should disbelieve. A modest, and a candid doubter is a most amiable Character.

‡ *Bring up Samuel to Me.*

|| But it is urged, that she knew *Saul* before, from the advantage of his stature, and that her fears were only pretended ; not as arising from the sight of *Samuel*, but from the fear of *Saul*. But why ? *Saul* had already given her all the assurance of safety, that he could give : and, it is plain, he apprehended her fears arose from the sight of *Samuel* : for he gives her no more assurances now, and only bids her not be afraid ; asking her, *For what sawest thou ?* Which plainly shews, that he apprehended, she was frightened at what she saw, and that he himself was not. And if he was not, he could not be imposed upon. The text tells us, indeed, that he was exceedingly terrified at what *Samuel* told him : which grounds a fair presumption, that he was in no fright before ; for if he had, surely, that also had been told. Could any thing be more unfaithful in an historian, that to conceal his fears upon one head, and to relate them upon another ? to conceal them, where they tended to detect the imposture, (if there was any) and to relate them, where that relation could only tend to establish it ?

desires to know, what it was she saw, which could cause her fears ; *Be not afraid ; for what sawest thou ?* And the whole tenor of his answer, *to *Samuel's* question, is as rational, and undisturbed, as any thing I ever read.

In the next place, let us consider, whether this person, supposed to be an impostor, acts in character.

Are we to believe, that a little, contemptible juggler, (supposing such a person, without any foundation in the history) or a poor, dastardly woman, would dare to treat a king of *Israel*, with that air of superiority, and contumely, wherewith *Samuel* treats *Saul*, on this occasion ? Would she, that paid such court to him, the instant the affair was over, treat him, with so high a hand, whilst it was in agitation ? *Josephus* observes of this woman, that she was in her nature gentle, compassionate, and beneficent. Is this agreeable to that character ? to insult, to threaten, and to upbraid ; — to ask him, to the reproach of his reason, and religion, as well as the disgrace of her own art, how he came to enquire of her ; — Would she dare to treat *Saul* so ? *Saul*, famed for rage, and resentment, and not famed for mercy ; *Saul*, that rooted the race of impostors out of the land ! And all this, after it was owned she knew him ! He must have as much credulity as an infidel, that can believe this.

In the next place : Would an impostor be so very zealous, for a strict observance of the law, and commands of God ; and so rigid in pronouncing divine vengeance, upon the violation of them ? and, in the depth of his cunning, limit that vengeance to time, place, and person ? and all this, at no greater distance, than the next day ?

These suppositions are too wild to be seriously confuted ; they are the very reverse of what should, and would have been done, on such an occasion, had imposture interfered in it. Every one knows,
the

the-business of impostors is to flatter, to delude, to deceive, to answer doubtfully; to promise good, and put off the evil: it was this woman's business, in a particular manner, to act thus. Had she promised *Saul* victory, and the success had answered, she was sure of considerable advantage. He, who could have no benefit from priests, or from prophets, would, doubtless, have had her in high honour; and with good reason.

If he died in the battle, all was safe; and even if he escaped, and was worsted, what she said, would, at least, have been taken for an indication of good-will, and good-wishes to the king, and to his people; and so would be more likely to escape any after-enquiry. Whereas, if she prognosticated evil to the royal race, she was sure of destruction, if the event did not at once justify, and save her. Nay, it might justify, and yet not save her: For, might not *Saul's* companions, or some of his surviving friends, think, that this evil fortune was the effect of her incantations, and the work of some wicked spirits, under her influence? And would she, who knew her own ignorance, put all this to the hazard of a conjecture? And would God make the event exactly, and minutely conformable to that conjecture, to establish the credit of imposture over the face of the earth, and to the end of the world?

But, it is urged, that an impostor might easily know, what past between *Samuel*, and *Saul*, in relation to *Amalek*; an impostor might know, that the *Philistines* were much stronger, and, therefore, would conquer; and that *Saul*, and his sons would rather die, than fly, or yield.

Suppose this; — suppose such wretched creatures as these; suppose the wisest of the fallen angels, exactly acquainted with the conversation, with the very style, and phraseology, which passed between *Samuel*, and *Saul*, in relation to *Amalek*; and passed,

for ought appears, between those two only ; suppose them to know, (what hath no foundation in the text *) that the *Philistines* were now much stronger, more numerous, as well as in much better heart, than the *Israelites* ; Did it follow, that the *Philistines* must conquer, and kill all before them ? Have greater, and stronger armies always conquered, from the foundation of the world ? Or, hath the matter of fact, generally speaking, been quite otherwise ? Were not the *Philistines* yet stronger, and more numerous, some few years before ? and the *Israelites*, beyond all comparison, less numerous, and more affrighted ; hiding themselves in woods, and rocks, and caves, and reduced at last to six hundred men, without one spear, or sword among them all ? And, did the *Philistines* conquer for these reasons ? Quite otherwise.—See 1 *Sam.* ch. xiii, and xiv.

I will go one step farther :—Suppose the subtlest spirit in hell to know, that God had forsaken *Saul* ; and suppose him to know, from the experience of ages, that *they* are doomed to sure destruction, whom God hath forsaken : could he foresee, for that reason, the time of his destruction ? No ; — the times, and the seasons are, solely, in the hand of God.

In the time of the battle just now mentioned, *Saul* had just then greatly offended God : *Samuel* had just then denounced the divine vengeance, and deposition upon him for it : And yet, *Saul*, not contented to profane the altar, with impious, and unhallowed hands, had the hardiness, knowing himself under the divine displeasure, to call for the ephod, to consult God ; and, after all this, rushed into battle, without waiting for his answer : Then, surely, if ever, might human, or satanick wisdom have

* It should seem, from the text, that *Saul* had now the greatest army, that ever the *Israelites* brought into the field ; for it plainly tells us, that he had gathered all *Israel* together, and they pitched in *Gilboa*, 1 *Sam.* xxviii. 4.

have pronounced his fate, as far as impiety, as far as provoking, and being deserted by GOD, deserved it; and that signal inferiority of his forces foretold it. And yet, had Satan so pronounced, the event had shewn him as strangely deceived. What he could not pronounce then, could he, and would he dare to pronounce now? And if *he* could not, could any thing inferior? Could a poor, groveling impostor pronounce it, upon the foot of much less probability? infinitely less knowledge, and greater hazard!

But an evil spirit, or even an impostor, might know, that *Saul*, and his sons were determined either to die, or conquer in the battle.

Let this also be allowed, without any foundation in the text: Hath not many a man been determined to die, and yet been prevented? But, the truth is otherwise: Neither *Saul*, nor his sons were determined to die; they all fled from the enemy, as fast, and as far as they could. The enemy first overtook the sons of *Saul*, and slew them: And when *Saul* could fly no farther, rather than fall into the enemy's hands, who were hard at his heels, he killed himself.

Besides all this; Shall we so far outrage our reason, and our religion, as to believe any Being, but GOD, capable of seeing into futurity, and pronouncing upon it? If there be any that think so, let me call upon them, with *Isaiab*, to bring forth their strong reasons. *Let them bring forth, and shew us what shall happen: Let them shew the former things what they be, that we may consider (or set our hearts upon) them; or declare us things for to come.* — In one word: The assertions, and reasonings on the other side, seem to me grounded upon great mistakes, and fruitful of grievous absurdities. I cannot assent to them; I envy no man that can.

The consequence from all this is clear: If that person, who now denounced the divine vengeance upon *Saul*, under the semblance of *Samuel*, was neither an impostor, nor an evil spirit; he must be, what the Scriptures constantly call him, throughout this narration, *Samuel*.

That spirits of another world may carry about them such vehicles, as may admit them to a sensible commerce with us; in like manner, as our spirits bear about these bodies of ours, the best philosophy will admit. And, that they have done so, upon extraordinary occasions, the most authentick histories in the world will attest. If, then, God Almighty thought fit either to appoint, or permit, *Samuel* to appear to *Saul*, on this occasion; I see no more difficulty in it, than in his appearing to him, on any other occasion, whilst he was in this world, and in full health, and strength. For *Saul* no more saw his spirit, then, than he did now; and his spirit was as well able to bear a body about with it, now, as it was, then.

The only question, then, is, Why God should appoint, or permit, *Samuel* to appear on this occasion? And this is a question, which no man living hath a right to ask, and be informed in. Such questions as these, are the very source, and fountain-head of all infidelity:— *I do not know, why things should be done so and so; and, therefore, I will not believe they were done.* — And what is this, but saying, in other words, that you are as wise as God; and, as good a judge of fit, and just, at least, with regard to things of this world, as He can be? and, therefore, it is ridiculous to suppose, that He transacted any thing in the affairs of this world, which you cannot discover to be wise, and fit, and just. Can any thing in nature be more extravagant, than such surmises as these?

“ But

“ But, is it likely, that GOD should refuse to answer *Saul*, when he consulted him in ways appointed by himself, and yet, should answer him in a forbidden way ? *

I answer ; What, if it be not ? that is, What, if my little understanding cannot reach the reasons of this conduct ? Must it follow, that there was no such thing ? Is not this the same infatuation of arrogance, which was just now reprov'd, and expos'd ?

But, after all ; What, if GOD did not depart from his own institutions ? What, if *Saul* did not consult him in ways appointed by Himself ? The ways appointed by Himself to consult him, were by prophets, to whom he manifested himself in visions, as he did to *Samuel* ; or by prophets, to whom he vouchsafed a more open communication of his purposes, as to *Moses* ; or by *Urim* and *Thummim*.

It is not likely, that *Saul* consulted GOD by the *Urim* and *Thummim* of his own appointment ; for, that was with *Abiathar*, and *Abiathar* with *David*. And, very probably, there was no prophet, then alive, to whom GOD communicated himself, either by vision, or by his word.

Many learned men have thought the conduct of GOD, on this occasion, to be in near conformity, and exact analogy to what he did after, in the case of *Abaziah* (2 Kings, chap. i.) : *Abaziah* was very ill, from a fall through the lattice of one of his upper chambers ; and, in his anxiety, to know the event, he ordered some of his servants to enquire of *Baalzebub*, the idol of *Ekron*, about his recovery : but, before his messengers could reach the idol, GOD sent his prophet to stop them short, and to pronounce their master's fate.

Saul, in danger, and anxious about the event of it, applies to a *Pythonefs* to assist him by her incantations, and to call up the spirit of *Samuel* : but, before she begins one word of her spells, or charms, the

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prophet

prophet interposeth, frightens her, and pronounceth *Saul's* doom; and she herself witnesseth the truth of his appearance. There is, indeed, this difference; that *Abaziab* applied to the idol, without ever applying to any prophet; which *Saul* is said to have done: but, that he did this, with any seriousness, or right sense of religion, is not believed; and, if he did not, he was, doubtless, as wicked in applying, as *Abaziab* in not applying.

On the other hand: What, if *Saul* did consult God, in a way appointed of himself; and, What, if God did depart from his own institutions, on this occasion? Is God so tied down to his own institutions, that he cannot, at any time, depart from them?

Here it is a fine *dilemma*: If God confines the communication, and manifestation of himself, and his purposes, to priests, and prophets; *Are all the rest of his creation excluded? Is he the God only of priests, and prophets? All this is artifice, and contrivance, plain priestcraft!* If, at any time, he is said to have manifested himself, in a different manner, such accounts are incredible; for, is it likely, he should depart from his own institutions!

But, still it may be urged; Is it likely, he should manifest himself in a way, which he himself had forbidden?

Answer; That God should manifest himself by his prophets, to encourage, or countenance what he himself had forbidden, is, indeed, exceedingly unlikely: or, to speak more justly, is very absurd to suppose. But, that he should interpose, to reprove that practice, is, with great submission, no way incredible, or improbable.

I beg leave to observe, That the 6th, and 7th verses of the cxxxixth psalm, seem to allude to this passage; and the sudden interposition of God by his prophet, where he was least expected: *Whither shall I go, then, from thy Spirit? or whither shall I go, then, from thy presence? If I climb up into heaven, thou art there;*

there : if I go down to bell, thou art there. Now, what we render, *Thou art there*, in this last clause, is, in the original, *Lo! thou*; expressing a kind of surprize, upon the suddenness, and unexpectedness of the divine appearance.

But, if *Samuel* had been raised by God, no doubt, he would never have said unto *Saul*, *Why hast thou disquieted me?* for it would have been no disquiet, nor trouble to him, to come upon God's errand *.

But, is this gentleman sure, that the prophet's disquiet arose from his being sent on that errand? Surely, he will not say so, upon better deliberation. No; his disquiet plainly arose from *Saul's* hardened impenitence, in the ways of irreligion; it was this that grieved, and provoked his righteous spirit. And, so it should be translated, *Why hast thou provoked me, to make me to rise up?* Why dost thou ask of me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee? Hath God forsaken you; and do you hope for help from me? from me, his minister, who act nothing, but in obedience to his will! Is God offended with you; and will you enquire what to do, in a way that he hath forbidden? Will you go on still to offend him, more and more? Know then, that I am now come to confirm that sentence, which God, long since, past upon you, by my mouth, for disobeying his commandments: *Your kingdom is divided, and given to David*; and God will deliver you, your sons, and your people, into the hands of the *Philistines*: And, this sentence shall be executed upon you to-morrow: To-morrow shall you, and your sons be with me, among the dead.

All this is plainly spoken in the indignation of a righteous spirit against guilt; and he must have read it with very little attention, that doth not see it to be so.

* *Discourse on Witchcraft, &c. p. 11.*

But, *Samuel* appeared with a mantle. A mantle was not, that we know of, any part of the prophetick garb: or, if it were, it is pretty evident, from some parts of the Scripture, that, when these persons prophesied, they put off their upper raiment.

I answer; That, when *Samuel* denounced God's judgments upon *Saul*, he was clad in a mantle; which *Saul* tore on that occasion. He now came to repeat, and to ratify the sentence, then denounced; and to strike him with fuller conviction, he appears in the same dress, the same mantle, in which he denounced that sentence. And, since he now again denounced a division of the kingdom, why may we not presume, that the mantle shewed now the same rent, which was the emblem of that division? Is it irrational to suppose, that, when he spoke of this division, he held up the mantle, and pointed to the rent? It is well known, the prophets were men of much action in their speaking (and often illustrate their predictions by emblems); and such action, as I now mention, I think, could hardly be avoided, on this occasion.

Give me leave to add, that the Bible is a history of God's providence, more particularly, to a peculiar people. It teacheth us, that all revolutions in the world, are of his appointment, and all events in his hands; that nations are punished, and kings deposed, for their guilt, and others appointed in their stead. And, in order to convince his people of these great truths, God, at sundry times, raised up prophets from amongst them, to denounce his judgments upon their guilt, and to foretel the fatal consequences of it. If they repented upon these monitions, his judgments were averted; if not, they were surely executed.

Now, what is the infidel objection to these prophets? Why, truly, they were wild enthusiastick men, who foretold things at a venture: if they came to pass, well, and good, their credit was established;

ed ; if they did not, why, then, something happened that altered the case. They never wanted evasions ; they had always some shift to bring themselves off.

—For example :

How might this history be objected to? *Samuel*, in his life-time, often reproved *Saul* for his guilt ; and told him, that God had given away his kingdom from him, for that guilt : but, he never told him to whom, nor when the sentence should be executed upon him.

It is true, *Saul* died in battle ; and *David*, after some time, succeeded him. Who knows, that this was the effect of that sentence ? *David* might have died before this happened ; and another might have succeeded him, instead of *David*. Neither *Saul*, nor many of his court, believed one word that *Samuel* said : And why should we ? his kingdom was given away, many years before, and yet, *Saul* was in full possession of it still : Could there be a subject of more mockery, upon prophets, and priests, and priestcraft, than this ?

Hold ! say the Scriptures ; the sentence is sure, and shall be executed, though it be respited, and the criminal reprieved. And, to evince this, beyond all possibility of doubt, God raises the same prophet, that predicted this event ; and, at the very instant of predicting it, cautioned him against the guilt of divination * : I say, that prophet, who predicted this sentence, God now raises up from the dead, to confirm that sentence ; to tell him, that the kingdom was, that day, to be taken from him, and would be divided ; to name the very person, to whom it was given ;—to confirm the sentence, beyond all possibility of cavil ;—to shew by whom, and when, and where, and how, it was to be executed ;—to shew, that the execution of it was instant, and should be deferred no longer, than the very next day :

* 1 Sam. xv. 23. *For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, (in Heb. divination.) and stubbornness as iniquity, and idolatry.*

day:—Was not this an occasion worthy of the divine interposition? Was not this *Dignus Deo vindice nodus*?

One would think, all this were sufficient to silence infidelity: but, alas! the human vanity, and perverseness are not so easily quelled. It is possible still to object; That it was not *Samuel*, that did all this.

Now the Case stands thus:—The Scriptures say, *Samuel* was seen on this occasion;—that *Saul* perceived it was *Samuel himself*;—that *Samuel* spoke, and denounced the divine judgments, — and *Saul* heard him;—and the judgments he denounced, were demonstrably such, as none, but God, could denounce. And some men, that call themselves critics, without attending to the text, the nature of the prophet's threats, or the reason of his appearance, say, it was not *Samuel*, that did all this, but some impostor, or some evil spirit; and, they say this, upon the idlest reasons, that ever were urged; reasons, that have already been abundantly confuted, and exposed. And can it, yet, be made a question, which we shall believe?

I have but two observations to annex: The first is: That the son of *Syrach*, who seems to have had as much wisdom, penetration, and piety, as any critic, that came after him, is clearly of opinion, with the sacred historian, that it was *Samuel himself*, who foretold the fate of *Saul*, and his house, in this interview. And it is no ill presumption, that his judgment was also that of the *Jewish* church, upon this head.

The next is: That whereas, it hath been made a question, whether the *Jews* had any belief of the immortality of the soul; this history is a full decision upon that point: And, perhaps, the establishment of that truth, upon the foot of sensible evidence, was not the lowest end of *Samuel's* appearance upon this occasion.

C H A P. XXIV.

David goes with Achish, to the Rendezvous of the Philistine Army, at Apheck. The Philistine Lords wou'd suffer him to go no farther. What ensued thereupon.

IT is now time to return to *David*.

We may easily apprehend, to what streights he was reduced, upon *Achish's* insisting, that he must go with him against *Saul*. He was now under a necessity, either of warring against his country, or betraying his benefactor. The alternative was, indeed, distressful : but it is easy to see, how a man of honour must determine himself under it. His prince had banished, and outlawed him, innocent ; and his people had joined in the sentence. Nevertheless, he continued, as long as he could, not only not to injure either, but even to be beneficent to both. To be merciful, and long-suffering, to repay cruelty with tenderness, and baseness with beneficence, he well knew, was the noblest character, and resemblance of the Divinity ; but it is his only to be unwearied in well-doing !

David would still have been beneficent, if he could ; but the times would not let him : and, therefore, when things were brought to that extremity, that either he must fight against a people, who had made him their enemy, or betray a prince, that had protected him in distress, he had no choice left. He owed *Achish* allegiance, (for protection exacts allegiance) but he owed *Saul* none ; and there is no doubt, but he was determined to pay his debt. And, therefore, I cannot help thus far crediting the account, *Josephus* gives us of this matter, that he promised *Achish* his aid ; and assured him, he would take this occasion to requite his kindness, the best he could. He promised him, says *Grotius*, as *Themistocles*

cles did the *Persians*, ἰκὼν, ἀποκοντί γε θυμῷ. — That he promised him unwillingly, I have no doubt, and I can have none, that he promised him faithfully. The author of the viith psalm, could not act in another manner, and, at the same time, make so solemn an appeal to God, for his integrity. (And what, if this psalm were written in vindication of himself, from some calumny raised of him, upon this head ?) *O Lord, my God, if I have done any such thing, or if there be any wickedness in my hands ; if I have rewarded evil unto him, that dealt friendly with me : yea, I have delivered him, that, without any cause, is mine enemy.* The man that could save *Saul*, could not betray *Achish*.

And here I must once more observe, upon Mr. *Bayle's* singular candour : He is very angry with *David*, for deceiving *Achish*, where the deceit was no way injurious ; and, in the next breath, falls foul upon him, for resolving to be faithful, where infidelity had, in all probability, been fatal to his benefactor.

This we know, the person of the king was committed to *David's* trust, and care ; for, when he marched, we find it was in the rear, attending upon the king's person.

Achish could be no stranger to the inviolable reverence, which *David* had paid to the regal character ; and, therefore, probably, thought, he should be safer in his keeping, than if he committed himself to his own people, who do not seem to have had altogether so great a veneration for him. And *David*, doubtless, would gladly content himself with discharging that trust ; avoiding, as much as he could, to engage in the carnage of his countrymen ; or, perhaps, as he now perfectly understood the interests of both countries, he had some scheme of accommodation to propose, which might, for the present, adjust, and determine their dispute. Besides all this, *Jonathan* was in the adverse army : Let the generous

nerous reader ask his own heart, whether *David* might not have a secret pleasure, in the prospect, in the possibility of saving his friend's life, in the day of battle.

But whatever his purposes were, it pleased God to deliver him, out of all his difficulties, by inspiring the *Philistine* lords, with such a jealousy of him, as made them absolutely refuse to go to battle with him; in reality, perhaps, from secret envy, and indignation, to see him thus honourably distinguished by their prince; but, professedly, upon a suspicion, that he might purchase his reconciliation with *Saul*, at the price of betraying them to him, or joining against them, in a critical juncture. Nor was their apprehension without appearance of reason; for so their *Hebrew* associates (whether slaves, or subjects, I cannot say) served them, in the battle so happily (if not miraculously) begun by *Jonathan*, and his armour-bearer (1 *Sam. ch. xiv.*). And, doubtless, it was in memory of this, that seeing *David*, and his men, marching with *Achish*, they asked the king, *What do these Hebrews here?* At which *Achish*, surprized, and wondering, they should not know this man, and his importance, cried out, That it was *David*, the servant of *Saul*. Could they be strangers to *David*, and his merits, who had been so long with him, and behaved himself so well?

They knew very well, who he was, and gave their king to understand as much: They knew, that he was king-elect of the land, and more set by, even than *Saul* himself, and therefore, it was so much the more dangerous to trust him. This was right reasoning.

It is true, *David* had too much honour to betray his benefactor; and knew *Saul* too well, to think of any scheme of reconciliation with him; or to trust to the influence, any benefaction could have upon him; and, therefore, neither policy, nor honour could allow him to go into any schemes, prejudicial

to the interest of *Achish*. But the *Philistine* lords might see all this, in another light : very probably, they heard of *David's* late excess of generosity to *Saul* ; and, very possibly, (not considering the devil, that dwelt within him) they had no idea of such depravity, as could harden the human heart, in an invincible enmity to such a benefactor. — And they might imagine him sent away by *Saul*, (as *Darius* sent *Zopirus*) under a shew of enmity, on purpose to betray them. And, possibly, *David* himself might have found out some method, of inspiring them with such a jealousy, (as *Themistocles* did the *Persians*, on a different occasion). But, however it was, they absolutely refused to let *David* join them : and *David*, secure of being refused, appeared more urgent, to be admitted to share in the danger ; but the lords were determined to the contrary. And, therefore, the king, comforting him, as well as he could, under the indignity, that was done him *, advised him to return, with all expedition, for fear of farther exasperating

* It is observable, that *Achish*, on this occasion, maketh use of that form of swearing, which obtained among the *Jews*, *As the Lord liveth*. — From which some have concluded, that *Achish* had learned some part of *David's* religion ; and others go into great extremes on the other side : which, I own, I can see no grounds for. *David* was a man of sufficient address ; he well knew, how to converse with kings : nor was *Achish* the first, whose favour his accomplishments had acquired him. In all probability, he stipulated for the free exercise of his religion, before he threw himself into his service ; and such a stipulation might, naturally, be attended with an apology in its favour. Nor will *David's* character suffer us to suspect him so cold, and unconcerned in that point, as to omit any opportunity of recommending his religion, to the best advantage : for, surely, no mortal ever had it more at heart ; especially, after that declaration, which he himself hath made, in the cxixth psalm, sect. 6. (*Vau* :) *I will speak of thy testimonies also even before kings, and will not be ashamed*. What wonder, then, if *David* should have instructed, and *Achish* profited in this point, from *David's* conversation ? But, after all, possibly, *Achish* might have sworn by *Jehovah* on this occasion

perating them; and he did accordingly. And this advice (How adorable is the great God, in the purposes of his providence!) rescued *David* from infinite distress. For, leaving the *Philistines*, to pursue their way to *Jesreel*, he rose up early in the morning, and returned to *Ziklag*, (being joined on the road by some excellent soldiers, and eminent captains of the tribe of *Manasseh*) and reached it in three days. But how great was their surprize, and how inexpressible their grief, to find it utterly desolated, and burnt down to the ground! for the *Amalekites*, determined upon revenge, and taking the opportunity of *Achish*, and *David's* absence with their forces, ravaged the borders of *Judah*, and *Palestine*, took *Ziklag*, destroyed all the men, that were left for its defence, burnt the city, and carried away all the women, and children, captives.

David and his men, as it was natural, gave way to the first transports of their grief, on this sad sight: *They wept*, (says the text) *until they had no more power to weep; — and David was greatly distressed.* And, to add to his affliction, his men mutiny'd, and, in their despair, threatened to stone him: *And they spake of stoning him; because the soul of all the people was grieved, (was bitter, says the original) every man for his sons, and for his daughters: but David comforted himself in God:* He had always a sure resource in the power, promises, and providence of God.

When he had appeased them, as well as he could, he immediately sent for *Abiathar*, and the *Ephod*; and enquired of God, what to do, in that exigency, whether to pursue the enemy, and with what hopes of success. And having received this
gracious

occasion, as that *Jew* did by *Jesus*, whom a great man, † of the last age, so properly (and with so fine a satyr upon that profaneness, too common among Christians) reproved, for his assurance in presuming to swear, like a Christian.

† The old duke of Ormond: *This rascally Jew* (saith he) *has the impudence to swear like a Christian*

gracious, and encouraging answer, *Pursue; for thou shalt, surely, overtake, and, without fail, recover*; he obeyed, with all expedition, and marched on with the six hundred men, that attended him, until he reached the brook *Besor*, which runs between *Gaza*, and *Beersheba*.

Here, two hundred of his forces, being utterly exhausted, and faint, with so long, and so continued a march, for many days together, were left behind, to guard the baggage; and *David*, with the other four hundred, continued his pursuit.

On the way, finding a young man, sick, and faint, for want of food, they administered proper refreshment to him; and, as this took up some time, they, probably, made use of this occasion, to take some refreshment themselves.

When he had recovered his spirits, and his speech, he told them, upon enquiry, that he was an *Egyptian*, and belonged to an *Amalekite*, who had left him there, three days before, sick, and destitute of all manner of support, upon their return from an expedition against *Judah*, and the south of the *Cherethites*, and of *Caleb*; in which invasion, they had taken, and burnt *Ziklag*. And being asked, whether he could engage to guide them to that party? he, upon a solemn oath of safety, and not being given up to his master, (whose cruelty he had sufficiently experienced *) undertook to do so; being, without doubt, acquainted with the place, appointed for their rendezvous, after they thought themselves sufficiently out of danger.

What he undertook, he faithfully performed; and *David* came upon the company, in the end of the night, *spread abroad* (as the text expresses it) *upon all*

* Surely, the leaving such a slave, sick with fatiguing in his master's service, in an enemy's country, and utterly destitute of all the necessaries of life, in the midst of unpurchased plenty, is one of the strongest instances of inhumanity, that ever was heard of. This is a true specimen of *Amalekite* mercy.

all the earth, eating, and drinking, and dancing, thinking themselves now quite out of danger, from *David*, as well as they might *, and revelling for joy of their good success, and the great spoil they had taken, out of the land of the *Philistines*, and out of the land of *Judah*.

When *David* saw this, he waited, as some imagine, until they fell asleep, and assaulted them, in that condition, the next morning : but, I think, it is not probable, that so many men should wait tamely, and suffer their Wives, and Daughters to be exposed to the licentiousness of any one hour, that might succeed to such a revel : none, but a stranger to the spirit of the *Orientals*, could believe this. They saw every thing before them, that could excite their valour, or inflame their vengeance : they fell instantly upon the enemy, by the break of the day, and made a dreadful havock ; nor ever ceased from the slaughter until night : *And David smote them* (says the text) *from the twilight, even unto the evening of the next day : and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men, which rode upon camels, and fled.*

Those valiant men of *Manasseh*, who fell in with *David*, upon his return from *Achish*, being excellent soldiers, and leaders, and less fatigued than the rest of his forces, were of great service to him, on this occasion.

What crowned the success, was, that *David*, and all his men recovered, every man, their wives, and children, and every thing they had lost, together with all the plunder, the enemy had taken elsewhere, vast flocks, and herds of cattle, which they now separated from their own ; and, in honour of their leader, (now repenting of their late insolence) distinguished by the name of *David's Spoil*.

VOL. I.

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* *Securum hostem, ac successu rerum secordius agentem invadunt : cæsi vigiles : perrupta castra. Tacit. Hist. 11.*

This success will, upon enquiry, appear so extraordinary, and so astonishing, that it is not easy to account for it, otherwise, than from the peculiar superintendence of Providence, over *David*, and his concerns. And *David* himself was fully persuaded, it was so: it is in this persuasion, he cries out, at the xviiiith psalm, *It is God, that girdeth me with strength of war:—He maketh my feet like harts feet:—He teacheth mine hands to fight, and mine arm shall break even a bow of steel:—Thou hast made mine enemies to turn their backs upon me.*

The peculiar interposition of providence is seen, in every circumstance of this adventure; — the number, the perseverance, the issue.

That they might not think, their number did the work, GOD reduced them to four hundred, as he did *Gideon's* company to three (*Judges, ch. vii.*): and, therefore, when he commanded *David* to pursue, he, in effect, said to him, what he said before to *Gideon*; *Arise, get thee down unto the host; for I have delivered it into thine hand.*

Many others have been as fortunate, in surprizing, and as successful, in slaughtering their enemies: but to have strength, both for the carnage, and pursuit, for so many hours together, is altogether extraordinary. But what is yet more extraordinary, is, that he should recover all the captives unhurt, out of the hands of a people, so abandoned, and so execrable, as the *Amalekites*!

Some imagine, that these miscreant *Amalekites*, being poor, spared their captives, from a prospect of profiting greatly, by the sale of them: but others, with more reason, think, they only respited their cruelty, to execute it, to more advantage, at their leisure. For my own part, I shall pronounce nothing upon the matter: I have no distinct, and particular idea of their avarice, but, I think, I have a very clear one of their cruelty; and, I am persuaded,

suaded, they spared their captives, from inveterate malice.

How beautiful a contemplation is it, to observe the signal goodness of God, and malignity of man, co-operating to the same end!

I shall add only this short observation, that two points are clear'd from this relation: The first is, that the *Cherethites* were *Philistines* *; the second, that the *Amalekites* were enemies to the *Philistines*. And, therefore, however *David* might have acted, beside the intentions of his benefactor, yet, he certainly did not act, against his interest, in destroying them.

As *David* returned, those of his forces, who were too faint to follow him, being now recovered, went out to meet him; and he saluted them, as became the common father of his people, and enquired kindly of their health: Which, some ill men of his attendants, interpreting, as an indication of kindness, immediately cried out, That they should have no part of the enemy's spoil, but be content with the recovery, of what they had lost. This inhuman, and iniquitous declaration, *David* quickly controlled, with a proper authority, tempered with singular piety, and well-judged calmness; *Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that, which the Lord hath given us, who hath preserved us, and delivered the company, that came against us, into our hands.* He then pronounced, that they who went down to battle, and they, who staid behind, to guard the goods, and provisions of the army, should share alike, in the enemy's spoil: well knowing, that there was as much merit, in contributing to save a citizen, as to destroy an enemy. That those, who now staid behind, had no other demerit, than that of a weaker constitution.

Chalcocondylas tells us (*lib. 5.*); that the *Pisidians* went further, and gave part of the spoil to those, who staid at home, and guarded the houses: And

* 1 Sam. xxx. 14, 16.

God himself appointed half to those, who staid at home, in the war with *Midian*, (*Numb. ch. xxxi.*)

This determination of *David's*, became a law among the *Israelites*, from that day, to the time, that this history was written : and we have reason to believe, that it lasted, after this, as long as the *Jewish* polity did ; and was restored with it : and is generally understood, to have been practised by the *Maccabees* (*2 Maccab. ch. 8.*).

I have already observed, that, as *David* returned from the *Amalekite* carnage, the soldiers separated the hostile flocks, and herds, and called them *David's Spoil* : and we find, by the sequel, that they made good their words. For, when *David* returned to *Ziklag*, he sent presents to all his friends, that had protected, and entertained him in his exile, whether in *Judea*, or out of it. And, from the account of this matter, left us in the sacred text, it appears, that *David* had, in his exile, sojourned in many places, whither the sacred historians did not think fit to trace him.

I should be glad to learn, from any candid reader, in what light this conduct of *David's* appears to him. I freely own, that, as often as I have read it, it never appeared to me in any other, than that of an honest, and overflowing gratitude, for favours received : nor, do I believe, I ever should have had sagacity enough, to see it in any other, if the penetrating *Mr. Bayle* had not taught me, to look upon it in the light of bribery. He doth not, indeed, brand it by so harsh a name ; he hath the goodness to abate of his usual severity to *David*, on this occasion, and to call it only *a gaining of the chief men* (of his tribe) *by presents* ; at the same time, distinguishing the phrase by capitals, lest it should not sufficiently be noticed.

I thank God, that he hath formed me with a plain, and unrefining sight, that sees things only as they are shewn to me, and as they shine out, in their natural light.

I read in the text, that *David* sent presents to his friends; and I always imagined, that friends were persons, already gained to our interest; and I imagined, that *David* had merit enough, with the whole realm of *Israel*, to make some of them his friends, without bribery. I read, that the rovers, the *Amalekites* had spoiled the South of *Judah*; and I did not know, but *David* had a mind to make his friends some reparation, for the damages they had sustained: I read also, that he had sent presents to the *Jerahmeelites*, and *Kenites*, and all the places where he, and his men were wont to haunt; and I imagine, to this day, that if he had nothing, but self-interest, in view, he had better have confined his favours, to those of his own country.

Every one hath heard enough of bribing, for some years past; and yet, as little scrupulous as some men are, of their censures upon that head, (how justly, I neither mean to say, nor insinuate) I don't remember to have heard, any man charged with bribing, for an election, before the borough was vacant, or the member sick, or the parliament dissolved, or its period expiring, and known. And if any man, in such an interval, should, upon some remarkable turn of fortune, in his favour, send some presents to some near relations, or particular friends of that borough, to whom he was known to be greatly obliged, I can never be brought to believe, that such a conduct, could justify the passing of a vote of corruption, and bribery upon him.

C H A P. XXV.

The Battle of Mount Gilboa.

THE reader will, I believe, now think it high time, that we resume the thread of our history, as far as it relates to *Saul*.

Saul, as I humbly apprehend, was not long returned to his camp, before the *Philistines* attacked it, and, after some time, gained it. There is no doubt,

but that he, and his sons made all the resistance, that might be expected, from such great captains, and such valiant men; but to no purpose: when the *Philistines* had once forced their intrenchments, they bore down all before them.

After a considerable slaughter, the *Israelites* fled; and *Saul*, and his sons fled with the rest: but in vain; for the enemy press'd so close upon them, that *Jonathan*, and his brethren * were slain. *Saul* was yet alive, but faint, weary, and wounded; and, despairing to outgo his pursuers, he called to his armour-bearer to dispatch him, lest he should fall alive, into the enemy's hands: *Draw thy sword*, (said he) *and thrust me through therewith, lest these uncircumcised thrust me through, and abuse me*: which his armour-bearer dreading to do, he himself took the sword, and fell upon it, and died; and his armour-bearer quickly followed his example, and died by his side.

No sooner did the *Israelites* of the adjacent vale, see the battle go against *Saul*, but they deserted their cities, in the utmost consternation; which the *Philistines* quickly seized.

When the *Philistines* came, the next day, to strip the slain, the text tells us, *they found Saul, and his sons, fallen upon mount Gilboa; and they cut off his head, and stripped off his armour, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to publish it in the house of their idols, and among their people, that public thanksgivings might be made to their gods, throughout the whole country.*

His head they fastened in the temple of *Dagon* †, after they had stript off the hair, and flesh; and they put his armour in the house of *Ashteroth*, (these were their great idols, different in shape, but agreeing in the lewd ceremonials of their worship) and his body they fastened to the wall of *Beth-shan*; as they did
those

* *Abinadab*, and *Malchishua*.

† 1 *Chron.* x. 10.

those of his sons also. How they disposed of their heads, and arms, is not said: but, it is to be presumed, that they also were disposed of, in like manner, with those of their father.

I am now at leisure, and I hope, the reader is so too, to make some reflections upon this battle; and to consider some objections, in relation to the preceding history.

In the first place, then, I think it evident, from many concurring circumstances, that *Saul* was now attacked in his camp.

In the next place; I think, it is as evident, from the tenor of the history, that he could not be long returned to his camp, before the *Philistines* attacked it.

And, thirdly; I think, it highly probable, that they were encouraged to this attempt, by some secret information, of *Saul's* having stollen out of the camp, the evening before, with his general, (for *Abner* is supposed to have been one of his attendants) and another person: 1st, Because an intelligence of that kind was not hard to be had; and, 2^{dly}, Because the having it, was the strongest encouragement to such an attempt.

That *Saul* was attacked, is, I think, not obscurely intimated in the text, 1 *Sam.* xxxi. 1. *Now the Philistines fought against Israel.* Is it not evident from hence, that they began the fight? (and so interpreters understand it *) especially, considering, that the word here rendered, *fought*, might, as properly, have been translated, *assaulted*.

The text adds; *And the men of Israel fled, and fell down in mount Gilboa.* From hence also I think it evident, that *Saul* was attacked in his camp; for he was encamped upon *Gilboa*; and the battle was

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fought

* *Pugnasse dicuntur Philistæi, quia ipsi ultro priores Israelitarum copias invaserunt.* Menoch. Poilisyntopsis.

fought there, and the slaughter, and the fight began there ; whereas, had he attacked the *Philistines*, the battle had been fought at *Shunem*, where they were encamped.

What puts this matter out of all doubt, is, the account of *Saul's* death, brought to *David*, by the *Amalekite*, who is said to have come out of the camp from *Saul*. Now he came from where *Saul* lay dead : and, therefore, since he came from *Saul's* camp, *Saul* died in his camp. And here, we see the surprising exactness, with which *Samuel's* prediction was fulfilled, when he told *Saul*, that on the very next day, he should die, and his camp be taken also, the camp of *Israel* shall the Lord deliver into the hands of the *Philistines*.

It is allowed, that they, who attack, have this advantage ; that, as the attempt is presumed to arise from superior courage, and confidence of success ; the army attacked, is, for the most part, intimidated by it, and are apt to fly, upon the least advantage gained against them. It is natural to reason, that, if they could not keep off an enemy, with the advantage of their trenches, and other fences of their camp, they must be unable to deal with them, upon equal terms.

This, in all probability, was the case of *Saul*, and his army, who now partly fell, and partly fled from the *Philistines* : *Saul*, and his sons, fled with the rest, and were hotly pursued. It is not to be imagined, as I before observed, that such brave men, as they were, could allow themselves to fly, before they had used their utmost efforts, to repel the enemy. However, as *Saul* was warned of his fate, and, as there is no doubt, but he was desirous to elude it, he fled : and it is evident enough from the history, that he fled before his sons ; for they (who, it is to be presumed, were as swift as he) were first overtaken, and slain, and the enemy had not yet reached him ; when seeing them follow, in hot pursuit, and utterly despairing

despairing to escape, he called to his armour-bearer to dispatch him, as was now related.

Here *Josephus*, in the fulness of his national spirit, runs out into high encomiums upon *Saul*, and would fain set him off, as a consummate hero, and perfect pattern of patriotism, who, knowing he was to die, exposed himself, and his family to destruction, and thought it glorious to die, fighting for his country: but, in truth, there is not the least foundation for this high-flown panegyrick.

What his secret intentions were, is hard to say: but it is evident, to a demonstration, that his fate was not the effect of choice; for it was forced upon him; he being, as I before observed, attacked in his camp, before he had any time to take any measures, either for his own, or the common safety: and, when he found the battle going against him, he fled as fast, and far as he could; and, when he could fly no farther, he killed himself out of cowardice, for fear of falling alive, into the hands of the enemies, and suffering some indignities from them. How much nobler was that resolution of *Darius*, who, finding himself betrayed, and that he was to be either murdered, by his own subjects, or delivered into the hands of *Alexander*, would not, however, be his own executioner! *I had rather (says he) die by another's guilt, than my own.* (*Curt.* l. 5. cap. 12.)

A truly brave man would have died fighting, as *Jonathan* did, or would, at worst, glory in being abused, and even tortured, for having done his duty! *Saul*, then, died, not as a hero, but as a deserter. Self-murder is demonstrably the effect of cowardice; and it is as irrational, and iniquitous, as it is base. God, whose creatures we are, is the sole Arbitrer, as he is the sole Author of life: our lives are his property; and he hath given our country, our family, and our friends, a share in them. And, therefore, as *Plato* finely observes in his *Phædo*, God is as much injured by Self-murder, as I should be, by ha-
ving

ving one of my slaves killed, without my consent : Not to insist upon the injury done to others, in a variety of relations, by the same act.

In the next place, I beg leave to observe, That *Saul*, and his armour-bearer died by the same sword, which was the armour-bearer's.

That this armour-bearer died by his own sword, is out of all doubt ; the text expressly tells us so. And that *Saul* perished by the same sword, is, I think, sufficiently evident : *draw thy sword*, says he to him, *and thrust me through*. Which when he refused, *Saul* (says the text) *took the sword* * (*babereb*), *and fell upon it*. *What sword ? (Not his own ; for then the text would have said so) Why, in the plain, natural, grammatical construction, the sword before-mentioned, must be the sword now referred to ; that is, his armour-bearer's.

Now, it is the established tradition of the *Jewish* nation, that this armour-bearer was *Doeg* (and I see no reason, why it should be discredited) , and if so, then *Saul*, and his executioner both fell by that very weapon, with which they had before massacred the priests of God. Remarks of this kind have sometimes fallen from the wisest, and best historians, upon like occasions ; with whom (if any less serious or more lively reader be so disposed) I shall be contented, shall be proud, to be ridiculed.

It were easy to furnish the reader with sufficient instances : I shall only trouble him with three, all taken from *Plutarch*.

Brutus, and *Cassius* killed themselves with the same swords, with which they treacherously murdered *Cæsar* : I say, *treacherously murdered* ; because they lay

* So the *English* translation renders that word in the 5th verse ; and in the foregoing verse, *A sword*, 1 *Chron.* x. 4. 5. A negligence, which I am a good deal surprized at. My position, however, is clear from this passage. It is also clear, that the *English* translators thought so ; viz. that *Saul*, and his armour-bearer perished by the same sword.

lay in his bosom, at the same time, that they meditated his death. And *Calippus* was stabbed with the same sword, wherewith he stabbed *Dio*.

Another circumstance relating to this battle, is, that the *Philistines* gained it, as I apprehend, by the advantage of their archers. And my reasons for thinking so, are thus founded :

There is no mention of any archer, in any of the *Philistine* armies, or battles, before this *. And in this battle, these are the persons, that pressed so hard upon *Saul* : *And the archers hit him*, (says the text) *and he was sore wounded of the archers*. Now, what we render *wounded*, the best criticks interpret *frighted* : which still confirms the opinion, that he killed himself through fear. It was a way of fighting, for which he was not prepared, and, therefore, it threw him into a consternation.

In the next place, after this battle, *David* had the *Israelites* taught the use of the bow : which, doubtless, he would have done much sooner, when he commanded the armies of *Saul*, against the *Philistines*, had they then gained any advantage over the *Israelites*, by means of these weapons.

Now these archers were, doubtless, of vast advantage to the *Philistines*, in their attack upon *Saul's* camp : 1st, because an assault with that kind of weapon was new, and surprizing ; and all such are, generally, successful : and, 2^{dly}, because the arrows beat off all, that defended the fences of the camp, and destroyed them at a distance, before they could come to a close fight ; which might naturally throw them into terror, and confusion.

Sir *Isaac Newton* tells us, that those mighty numbers of men, who aided the *Philistines* against *Saul*,
in

* The art was not, indeed, unknown to them ; for *Jonathan* is celebrated for his skill, and dexterity in it ; and so are some of the worthies, who resorted to *David* : but it seems not to have been yet brought into common use ; altho' there is mention made of the archers of the kings of *Canaan* in the 5th chap. of *Judges*.

in the beginning of his reign, were the shepherds, expelled from *Egypt* by *Amosis*, some of whom fled into *Phœnicia*, and others into *Arabia Petræa*. Now his son *Ammon* conquered *Arabia*: Why, then, may we not fairly presume, that these archers, who now aided the *Philistines*, were either *Arabs*, who fled thither from *Ammon*, or those *Egyptians*, who fled before to *Arabia*, and learnt arching there from the natives, who are allowed the best bow-men in the world? Since the time, and circumstances suit, the conjecture will not, I believe, be thought ill-grounded.

In the last place: If this attack upon *Saul's* camp was encouraged, by the intelligence of *Saul's* having stoln out of the camp, the evening before; then his applying to the *Pythonefs*, was the immediate cause of his destruction. And this gives light to that passage, 1 *Chron.* x. 13. and at the same time receives light from it, that *Saul* died for his transgression, which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not; and also for asking one, who had a familiar spirit, to enquire.

C H A P. XXVI.

A short Essay upon the Character of Jonathan.

WHEN we meet with any person in history, of a very extraordinary character, whose death is, as we think, untimely, and his fate, in appearance, unworthy of his virtue, instead of submitting, with profound humility, to the dispensations of Providence, and reverencing the unfearchable ways of infinite Wisdom, we find a kind of impulse upon the mind, to enquire into the reasons of it. And, if we are disappointed in our search, we are too much tempted to repine, at the divine decisions, or, it may be, to impeach them; especially, if the character be amiable, and interesting, and such as we cannot help admiring and loving. This, I think,

think, hath, in some measure, been the case of every commentator, that hath considered the fate of *Jonathan*; and one of them, I find, hath considered him in the same light, that *Virgil* does *Ripheus*:

—— *Cadit & Ripheus justissimus unus*
Qui fuit in Teucris, & servantissimus equi.
Dis aliter visum.——

A man, in the estimation of the world, the justest of all the *Trojans*, but not so, in the sight of the gods.

There are, indeed, few characters among men, more lovely, or more extraordinary, than that of *Jonathan*; fortitude, fidelity, magnanimity! a soul susceptible of the most refined friendship, and superior to all the temptations of ambition, and vanity! and all these crowned with the most resigned submission, to the will of God.

These are his distinguishing lineaments: but there is no such thing as perfection in man. A finished character were, as one of our *English* poets well expresses it, *A faultless monster, which the world ne'er saw.*

Two things I find *Jonathan* justly chargeable with, in the Sacred History. The first is, A most grievous violation of all the laws of justice, nature, and nations, in smiting the *Philistine* garrison at *Geba*, in the midst of a profound peace: And the second, A great want of duty to his father, and a very indecent, disrespectful treatment of his character.

The first of these, will appear from the 13th, and 14th verses of the xivth chapter of the ist book of *Samuel*, compared with the 3^d, and 4th verses of the xiiith chapter.

The second is not obscurely hinted, in the xxth chapter of the ist book of *Samuel*, at the 30th verse, where *Saul* calls him, *the Son of perverse rebellion*; plainly intimating some obliquity in his behaviour, and restiveness to the dictates of his duty, in point
of

of obedience. But as this is the charge of an enraged man, commanding something unreasonable, little stress can be laid upon it.

But this point, is, I think, fully cleared from the xivth chapter of this book.

For, suppose it allowable in *Jonathan*, to steal from the camp, with his armour-bearer, and make an attempt upon the *Philistines*, without the leave of his father, and his general; which, I believe, the discipline of war will not admit: however, suppose him excusable in this, from some heroic, or divine impulse; What can excuse his disrespectful treatment of his father's character, upon hearing that *berem*, or *curse*, under which he had adjured the people, to touch no food, on that occasion? His father had a right, as a commander, to lay any temporary restraint upon his soldiers, which, he thought, might be for the publick good, and under what penalty he pleased; and, as a king of *Israel*, he had a right to adjure them; that is, to lay them under the obligation of an oath to observe it. Did it, then, become his son to call an action of this kind, *a troubling the land*; and to charge it as the reason, why the enemies were not more fully defeated? Was not such a speech as this, enough to excite a sedition, and rebellion, in the army? Allow him to have incurred the *berem*, through ignorance: Was that ignorance invincible? Or rather, Was it not the effect of his own transgression of duty? His conduct, in this respect, is, surely, less justifiable, than that of *Hippolytus*: and yet, it is the sense of antiquity, that he died, in consequence of his being devoted to destruction, by his father *Theseus*. Indeed, we are taught better: We know, that *the curse causeless shall not come*. But, surely, it is not easy to pronounce this curse, on *Jonathan*, causeless. At least, Did he not know himself included in the adjuration, and liable to the penalty, that attended it? Did he humble himself under that knowledge? or make any apology, or submission to
his

his parent? And should he not have done so under all the security of innocence! Or, if he thought, invincible ignorance acquitted him of all guilt, on that head; Did he think, it could acquit him of the guilt of setting light by his parent, or the curse due to it? *Cursed is he, that setteth light by his father, or his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen. (Deut. xxvii. 16.)*

Divines content themselves on this head, by observing, how providential it was, that *Jonathan* was taken off in this battle, to make way for *David*. But I could wish, they had been more solicitous to acquit the Providence of God, of that partiality, with which profane spirits are too apt to charge it, upon such occasions.

The sum of all is this: The guilt of massacring the *Philistine* garrison, is beyond all question. And, though there were not oftentimes, *one inevitable event to the righteous, and to the wicked*; it is certain, that for this guilt *Jonathan* deserved to die. And, for my part, I cannot acquit him of the other. But though I could acquit him of mortal guilt, on this account; yet is there (at least) an indecency, in this behaviour of his, which greatly distresses me.

The reader will, perhaps, see it in a clearer light, if he compares it with the demeanor of that great *English* hero, the *Black Prince*, after the battle of *Cressi*. It is certain, that the battle of *Michmas* was, in a great measure, won by the fortunate bravery of *Jonathan*, as that of *Cressi* was by the steady, and persevering valour of the *Black Prince*. *Jonathan* had now like to have lost his life, by his father's rash, but undesigning adjuration: The *Black Prince* was in little less danger of losing his, by his father's peremptory, and deliberate refusal, to send him any aid, against his enemies *, when hard beset by them.

When

* The king kept off from the engagement, with a strong body of men: He hovered (says *Echard*) on the hill, like a tempest in

When the battle was over, *Jonathan* suffered himself to reprove the misconduct of his father: And young *Edward*, far from upbraiding, or resenting, fell upon his knees, with all the marks of humiliation, and affection to his.

It must, however, be owned, that from *David's* celebrating the harmony, and union of this father, and son, it is highly probable, that *Jonathan* sufficiently attoned for this one act of rashness, by a course of subsequent duty, and piety to his parent. And such piety to such a parent, will, I believe, be allowed, to have had more than ordinary merit in it.

All that I have said, hath no other tendency, than to establish that noble question of the righteous, and humble *Job*; *Shall mortal man be more just than God?*

C H A P. XXVII.

Objections answered; and Reasons urged, to shew, that the Battle of Mount Gilboa was fought on the next Day, after Saul's consulting the Pythoness.

BUT we have still one objection more to struggle with; and that is, That the prediction, relating to the event of this battle, is not so precise, as we pretend; or, if it be, it was not true.

It is not so precise: For the word, *Mahar*, which we interpret, *To-morrow*, sometimes signifies an indefinite, distant, Time; and, if it be strictly understood of *To-morrow*, it was not true; for the battle, with the *Philistines*, was not fought on the
next

in a cloud, ready to discharge its fury, but, at present, only watching, and observing this unequal conflict. Here a message was sent to him from the earl of *Northampton*, to desire him to come down, and succour his son, now very hardly beset. Upon which he demanded, *Whether he was alive?* The messenger told him, *Yes; but was in danger of being overpowered by numbers.* Then (replied the king, with his usual courage) *let them know, that while my son is alive, they send for no assistance to me; for the honour of this glorious day shall be his.*

next day : for *Endor*, (say they) probably, was one day's journey from *Gilboa*. *Saul* had eaten no meat, all that day, and all that night : It is probable, he eat something, before he left the camp ; and, therefore, he was a whole day, and part of the night, in travelling thither from *Gilboa* : It must take him as much time to go back ; consequently, the battle could not be next day : And, besides all this, the camp was moved, twice after this, before the day of battle.

To these objections I answer thus, in their order :

First ; It must be owned, that the word *Mabar*, does sometimes signify a future, indefinite time ; and I know no word, that may not, sometimes be taken figuratively : I am sure, the word, *To-morrow*, is often taken so, in *English*. But, the primary, ordinary, obvious sense of it is strictly, the next day after the time, in which the speaker uses it ; and it is evident, from *Saul's* terror, that he so understood it here. For, had he thought these evils threatened only in some future, indefinitely distant time, they would not have made that impression upon him : And, therefore, if the person, who said this, did not mean, what *Saul* understood, he meant to deceive him ; and I cannot believe, it was *Samuel*, that said it.

Now, I am clearly of opinion, that the battle with the *Philistines* was strictly, and literally fought on the next day ; and, I think, there is nothing in the narration, to contradict this supposition. And, to evince this, I shall first shew the many great errors, and glaring mistakes, advanced on the other side, to support an idle hypothesis.

In the first place, they suppose *Endor* to be a day's journey from *Gilboa* ; and lest *Saul* should not be long enough in travelling it, they suppose, that, in that advanced age, and in those dangerous ways, he travelled on foot. Now, by all the best accounts,

Endor is not at the distance of three hours from *Gilboa*. *Gilboa* is in *Iffachar*, on the confines of *Manasseh*, and *Endor* in *Manasseh*. The greatest part of *Manasseh* was now in the hands of the *Philistines*, and the rest was very narrow, and little. *Salianus* says, that *Endor* was near *Skunem* : And Dr. *Patrick* tells us, that part of *Gilboa* was over-against *Endor*, and part over-against *Skunem*. And if so, we cannot well suppose it five miles distant. *Eusebius* fixes the right situation of it, near *Scythopolis*, or *Bethshan*, to the west of the river *Jordan* ; but tells us, that, in his time, there was a great village of that name, near mount *Tabor* ; Which some commentators, not attending to, imagine it was this village, which *Saul* resorted to, and ground all their idle reasonings, upon that mistake.

In the next place ; Is it likely, that *Saul* should leave his camp in the morning, and travel all the day, with only two servants, through a country, environed by his enemies ? for *Endor* was near *Skunem*, and not far from *Bethshan* ; and the *Philistines* were, then, at *Skunem*, and in possession of *Bethshan*.

But he was fasting all that day ; and, it is probable, he took food before he left the camp.

With great submission, the probability is altogether on the other side. Men, in great trouble, seldom think of eating, nor, indeed, can they eat.

Now, what these men make the business of two days, might very easily be effected in one night. For, if we suppose *Endor* twice as far off, as Dr. *Patrick* places it, a man, under a necessity of using expedition, might travel so far, and farther, stay three hours there, and return again in the compass of ten, or twelve hours. So that, supposing *Saul* to have left his camp a little before, or after sun-set, he might be back again early the next morning ; and the battle might be fought that day, as, I am well satisfied, it was.

But

But, it seems, there were two encampments, after this adventure at *Endor*.

So, indeed, it is asserted; but why, I cannot conceive. For my own part, I never could find the least foundation for such an opinion; besides a very careless perusal of the history.

The case is this: When two things are transacted about the same time, both these, and the circumstances of both, cannot be related at the same time; and, therefore, one of them must be told by way of anticipation.

It is said, that *Saul's* battle with the *Philistines*, was on the same day, with *David's* slaughter of the *Amalekites*. This is a great mistake*: however, let it, for the present, be supposed.

There was an incident, of great importance, previous to that battle, with which the reader should be acquainted. The author interrupts his relation of *David's* adventure, to acquaint us with this incident; and, in order, to inform us the better, he tells us the situation of both armies, at the time of this incident, and then, resumes the thread of *David's* history.

He first tells us, (*chap. xxviii. ver. 1, 2.*) that the *Philistines* gathered their armies together: *David* was there amongst the rest: *Achish* told him, He must go to battle with him; and *David* consented. Here the author leaves *David*, and passes on to the incident of *Endor*,—which happened some time after, that, when he resumed the thread of *David's* history, he might do it without interruption. Now, in order to give us a clear idea of the adventure at *Endor*, he tells us the situation, in which both armies were at that time; *Saul* in *Gilboa*, and the *Philistines* at *Sbunem*. Now some criticks, not attending to this, imagine that *Saul* was at *Gilboa*, and the *Philistines* at

P 2

Sbunem,

* For, at that rate, the *Amalekite* must have been six days in bringing the news of it: which is a very absurd supposition.

Shunem, when *Achish* told *David*, that he must go to battle with him : Whereas, it evidently appears from the subsequent relation, that *Achish* was then at, or going to *Aphek* ; and *Gilboa* was, to a demonstration, the last encampment of the *Israelites* (for there the battle was fought, and there, it is expressly said, the camp then was) ; and, consequently, *Shunem* the last of the *Philistines*. For *David* was dismiss'd upon the first review at *Aphek*, ch. xxix. And when the *Philistines* were at *Aphek*, the *Israelites* were at *Jezreel*, that is, *Gilboa*, (2 Sam. iv. 4.) whither the *Philistines* bent their course, in quest of them, the very day, that *David* was forced to return to *Ziklag*. So that it was impossible, *David* could be with the *Philistines* at *Shunem*, in sight of the *Israelite* army, when they were at *Gilboa*. The *Philistines* did not suffer him to march one inch with them, after the day of the first review.

Let us now consider the other way of reasoning : — *Saul* (say they) went to *Endor*, the night before *David* went to *Ziklag*. How gross a mistake is this ! *Saul* had not yet so much as seen the *Philistine* army, unless he could see them, at the distance of seventy miles. For the *Philistines* (as I now observed) were then at *Aphek*, and he at *Jezreel* ; and *Aphek* (as I shall soon shew) was, at least, seventy miles from *Jezreel*.

Now, I find no mention of more than two *Apheks* in Scripture ; one in *Judah*, and the other in *Manasseh*. Dr. *Patrick* thinks, there was a third in *Asher* ; which is the *Aphek* meant here, and with some appearance of reason : because, it is more probable, that the *Philistines* should assemble, and review their forces, upon their own borders, to which *Asher* was more central, and contiguous, than that they should defer such a review, until they came into the heart of *Saul's* country ; and go so far out of their way, that is, from the center of their own country, to make it. Now, supposing this the case, the nearest part of
Asher

Asber is, at least, two good days march from *Jezreel*; and, therefore, the *Philistines* were, at least, two days march from *Saul*, when *David* left them.

But it will appear, from a way of reasoning, intelligible to every man, of common understanding, that the *Apbek*, here mentioned, must be nearer to *Ziklag*, and farther from *Jezreel*.

The city of *Ziklag* was, in the first distribution of the country, given to the tribe of *Judah*; and, in the second, to that of *Simeon*: from whence it plainly appears, that it was situate in the confines of those two tribes. Now from *Gilboa* to the nearest part of *Simeon*, is more than 110 geometrick miles; in a direct line, without allowing for the winding of roads (and, with that allowance, at least 120). And for the truth of this, I appeal to every man, that can handle a scale, and compass. If then, *Apbek*, where *David* left the *Philistines*, was, as our adversaries suppose, in the valley of *Jezreel*, at the foot of *Gilboa*; then, *David* marched, at least, 120 miles, in the space of two days and a half; for he returned from thence to *Ziklag*, early enough, on the third day, to pursue the *Amalekites*, who were a considerable way off, and overtook them that very night.

Now, I am assured by military men, that twenty miles a day, on foot, is great marching, even for men every way appointed, and fitted for expedition; and, consequently, that *Apbek* we speak of, cannot be presumed, to have been more than fifty miles from *Ziklag*.

Now, if *David*, with his light band of active, and expeditious rovers, cannot well be presumed, to have marched more than 50 miles in two days and a half, *Achish* with his whole army cannot, I believe, be supposed to have completed the rest of the way to *Jezreel* [70 miles], in less than five days (at least, so I am assured by an eminent, and experienced captain). And, if their armies did not consist of

horse, chariots, and light-armed archers, who might, on occasion, be taken up by the chariots, or behind the horsemen; five days, in so hot a climate, were, perhaps, too small an allowance for such a march. And, surely, we must allow them one day's rest, after so long a march, before the battle. It is madness to imagine, that *Achish* should, with a weary army, and without being under a necessity, attempt upon *Saul*, so advantageously encamped. Nor will it, I believe, be thought unreasonable, to allow *Saul*, one day, to survey the strength, and number of his adversaries, and, at least, one more, to apply to God, in the several ways of *Urim*, prophets, and dreams *, before his fears carried him to *Endor*. Then will it be on the eve of the eighth day, from *David's* departure, at soonest, that *Saul* consulted the *Pythonefs*; and there is not the least reason to doubt, that the battle was fought the very next day after. And the *Amalekite*, who fled from thence, that day towards night, might reach *David* at *Ziklag*, on the third day, inclusive, from the battle; that is, on the third day, inclusive, from *David's* last return to *Ziklag*. If then, we suppose him, and his army to have rested one day, after all this fatigue, before their return, and to have spent three days, in their return † (which, considering their own fatigue, and that of the women, children, flocks, and herds, which came along with them, will not, I believe, be deemed unreasonable); then, will *David's* second arrival at *Ziklag*, be on the eighth day, after his departure from the *Philistines*; that is, on the very day, on which *Josephus* assures us, the battle with the *Philistines* was fought: for it was fought (as he tells us) on the day of *David's* return

* If we allow the first night, for applying to God by dreams, we cannot allow less than the next day, for applying by prophets and *Urim*.

† As the *Amalekites*, spent three days, in their march from *Ziklag* to the place, where *David* overtook them.

return to *Ziklag*, from the slaughter of the *Amalekites*; and his authority is of weight enough, in this point, because such a tradition might, easily, be transmitted, with truth.

This, I hope, will be deemed a fair, and rational account of the matter; I am sure, it is a candid one.

But, still it is objected; That, supposing this to be the case, as I have stated it, yet still this personater of *Samuel* falsifies: because he says in one place, that *Saul*, and his sons should be *with him*, i. e. among the dead, *to-morrow*; and in another, *The Lord hath done this thing unto thee this day*. Now, one of these assertions must be false, even though we suppose this spoken in the prophetick style; which, to imply the certainty of the prediction, speaks of things to come, as already past; for *Saul*, and his sons could not be killed, this day, and to-morrow too.

I answer; That both assertions were perfectly consistent, and strictly true.

The *Jewish* day began at six o'clock in the evening; and, therefore, whatever was to come to pass on the ensuing day, (i. e. light) was, in propriety of common speech, to happen to-morrow; and yet, at the same time, might, in a true, a proper, and a philosophick sense, be said to come to pass on this very day.

C H A P. XXVIII.

David receives an Account of Saul, and Jonathan's Death. His Lamentation upon that Head.

THE third day after *David's* return to *Ziklag*, from the slaughter of the *Amalekites*, a young man arrived from *Saul's* camp *, with all the marks
P 4 of

* In the *Hebrew*, it is, *from the camp, from with Saul*. This plainly shews, that the battle was in the camp.

of ill news upon him ; his cloaths rent, and earth upon his head : and, when he came before *David*, he fell down to the earth, and did obeysance. *David* was struck with the sight, and asked him, with great eagerness, whence he came ? He answered, That he had escaped from the camp of *Israel*. And, when *David* earnestly enquired, how matters went there ? he replied, That the army was put to flight, with a great slaughter ; and that *Saul*, and *Jonathan* fell among the rest. *David* then, enquired the certainty of the account, how he knew, that *Saul*, and *Jonathan* were dead ? The young man told him, That, as he happened, by chance *, upon mount *Gilboa*, he saw *Saul*, leaning upon his spear, and the chariots †, and horsemen following hard after him ; that the king called to him, and asked him, who he was ? And, being answered, that he was an *Amalekite*, begged him to stand upon him, and kill him ‖, being in great distress, because his life was yet whole in him ; and that he did, as the king commanded, being very sure, that he could not recover of the wounds, he had already received. And, to confirm his relation, he presented *David* with *Saul's* crown §, and bracelet, which he himself had taken from him. Then *David*, and all that were about him, rent their cloaths,

* There always are a great numbers of strollers, that follow camps, and this lad, probably, was one of them. Their business is pillage, and stripping the dead. This lad, it seems, knew his business, and got the start of the *Philistines*, in the pillage of *Saul*.

† This *Amalekite* was as great a liar, as *Sinon* ; but, it seems, not altogether so dextrous. Whether an account of chariots, pursuing upon a mountain, hath an air of probability, military men will best determine.

‖ *Saul*, in the true history, was afraid of being slain by the uncircumcised : And how was the matter mended, by desiring to die by the hand of an *Amalekite* ?

§ Possibly, the serious reader may not think it an observation, altogether unworthy of his regard, that an *Amalekite* now took the crown from *Saul's* head, which he had forfeited, by his disobedience in relation to *Amalek*.

cloaths, and mourned, and wept, and fasted all that day for *Saul, and Jonathan, his son, and for the people of the Lord, and for the house of Israel, because they were fallen by the sword.*

After this, *David* called, again, for the messenger of these evil tidings, and examined who he was. And being, again, informed, that he was an *Amalekite*, asked him, how he dared to stretch forth his hand against the LORD's anointed? And immediately crying out, *Thy blood be upon thy head; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the Lord's anointed;* he called to one of his attendants, and commanded him *to fall upon, and kill him.* He instantly obeyed, and dispatched the self-convicted wretch, doubly devoted to destruction; who, after all, died for a crime, which he had not committed; yet well deserved to die, for taking the guilt of it upon him. *David* rightly judged, that *Saul* had no power over his own life; and, consequently, should not have been obeyed in such a command: God, and the state had as much right to his life, when he was weary of it, as when he most loved it. And, besides all this, it behoved *David* to vindicate his own innocence to the world, by so publick an execution: he might otherwise, perhaps, have been branded with the guilt, of employing that wretch, to murder his persecutor.

Besides this, *David*, doubtless, had it in view, to deter others by this example. He consulted his own safety in this; as *Cæsar* is said, by restoring the statues of *Pompey*, to have fixed his own. This was a wise lecture to princes; and many of them have, I believe, profited by it: As *Vitellius*, we are told, put all those to death, who vaunted any merit in the death of *Galba*: not in honour of *Galba*, (as *Tacitus* observes) but from the prospect of present security, and future vengeance.

After the first shock of *David's* distress, for *Jonathan*, was over, he poured out his complaints, in that noble

noble strain of poetry, which was so natural to him, and which, I think, hath shamed all, that have ever followed him, upon that subject.

I never yet, saw justice done to it in any version ; and shall attempt to present my reader, with no more, than a plain, prose translation of it, taken, almost, verbatim from the *English Bible* ; except in one instance, wherein, as I apprehend, the present reading may be wrong : I submit to better judges :

“ O beauty of *Israel*, stabbed in thy high places !
 “ How are the mighty fallen ! Tell it not in *Gath*—
 “ publish it not in the streets of *Askalon* — lest the
 “ daughters of the *Philistines* rejoice — lest the
 “ daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.

“ Mountains of *Gilboa*, nor dew, nor rain upon
 “ you, nor fields of waved offerings ! For there the
 “ shield of the brave was cast away — the shield of
 “ *Saul* — the weapons of the anointed with oil.

“ From the blood of the slain, from the fat * of
 “ the valiant, the bow of *Jonathan* turned not back †,
 “ and the sword of *Saul* returned not empty.

“ *Saul*, and *Jonathan* were lovely, and pleasant in
 “ their lives ; and, in their deaths, they were not di-
 “ vided.

“ They were swift before eagles, strong before §
 “ lions.

“ Daughters of *Israel*, weep over *Saul* ; who
 “ cloathed you in scarlet, with delights, who put on
 “ ornaments of gold upon your apparel.

“ How

* The *Hebrew* word *beleb*, signifieth in this place, as I apprehend, the *inward fat*, such as was burnt on the altar. So it signifies, *Numb.* xviii. 17.

† The literal construction I take to be this : The *bow* of *Jonathan* was not bent without *the blood of the slain*, &c. i. e. every arrow from it was winged with death.

An *English* poet, I imagine, would be apt to translate it in this manner, or something like it, in a better style :

To vital blood, and fat of bravest foes,

The shafts of Jonathan unerring flew.

§ i. e. compared, or rather, preferably, to them ;

“ How are the mighty fallen, in the midst of the
“ battle!

“ Oh! *Jonathan*, stabbed in thy high-places! I
“ am distressed for thee, my brother *Jonathan*; very
“ delightful hast thou been to me: Thy love to me
“ was wonderful, passing the love of women. How
“ are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war
“ perished!

The bursts of sorrow in this poem, are so strong, so sudden, so pathetick! so short, so various, so unconnected! no grief ever was painted in such living, and lasting colours! And it is one sure sign, and beautiful effect of it, that *David's* heart was so softened, and melted by it, as to lose all traces of *Saul's* cruelty to him. He remembered nothing in him now, but the brave man, the valiant leader, the magnificent prince, the king of God's appointment, his own, once, indulgent master, his *Micah's*, and his *Jonathan's* father — But to be more particular:

As *Jonathan's* death touched him nearest, it was natural, he should be the first object of his lamentation — *Beauty (or glory) of Israel, pierced in thy high places.* — And, to put it out of all doubt, that *Jonathan* is here meant, he varies it in a subsequent verse — *Jonathan, slain in thy high places.*

How are the mighty fallen! &c. How untimely, and lamentably *Jonathan!* and how sadly, and shamefully *Saul*, by his own hand! This death, as it was matter of just reproach upon *Saul*, he knew, would be matter of more triumph with the enemy. He could not bear the thoughts of this infamy to his country, and his king, and, therefore, he breaks out into that beautiful apostrophe — *Tell it not in Gath!* &c.

Ye mountains of Gilboa, &c. Throwing away the shield, was matter of the highest reproach, in all the accounts of antiquity. And this, in the practice of so brave a prince, as *Saul*, was an example of
terrible

terrible consequence ; and, therefore, must not go unreprieved, especially, in a song, which soldiers were to learn. *David* could not censure *Saul* ; he was his prince, and his enemy : the infamy, however, must fall somewhere — let the place it happened in, be accursed, — Poetry justifies this : and, I will not scruple to say, It is the most masterly stroke, the science will admit. The rage, and indignation, expressed in the original line, *Al tal ve al matar yalechem*, is to me inimitable ; and the omission of all the auxiliary verbs, is a sufficient indication of it. And the second, succeeding line is little inferior to it ; — *Ki sam niggal magen gibborim*.

And here, I cannot but observe, with what inimitable address, *David* hath conducted this reproach. For, at the same time, that the mountains are cursed for it, he hath contrived to turn it into praise upon *Saul* : — *There the shield of the mighty was cast away* — No hint by whom.

Saul, and Jonathan were lovely, &c. — This sweetness, and harmony of their lives is, I think, inimitably expressed in the measure :

Hanncababim

Vebameimim behajebem —

The cadence is the same in all ; and the worst ear will find a chiming in them, wonderfully expressive of harmony.

As nobody, that I know of, hath attempted to shew the measure of this ode, I hope I shall be indulged, in a plain, unpretending conjecture, concerning it.

In the first place, then ; Whoever considers it, will find it plainly divided into six, distinct parts, or heads of complaint, or lamentation. These parts I take to be so many stanzas ; like the strophe, antistrophe, and epode of *Pindar*. And, if so, then, the beginnings of six of the verses, are plainly pointed out to us.

Every

Every sentence I take to be a verse; because real grief is short, and sententious. And, to me, many of these verses plainly demonstrate their own beginnings, and endings, without the aid either of unnatural elisions, or those monstrous, and ridiculous mutilations, and divisions of words, with which criticks have, to such simple eyes as mine, defaced some of the best odes of *Pindar*, and turned some of his finest verses into downright burlesque; confining him to their fantastick measures, who scorned to be confined to any, but those of his own free ear.

That noble exclamation, *How are the mighty fallen!* with which three stanzas are marked, I take to be the simple dictate of sorrow, upon every topick of lamentation; and is, therefore, I think, to be considered, as a kind of burden to the song, and to be either inserted in each stanza, as in the first; or added to it, as in the two last.

And, as the author did not take the trouble of transcribing it, in every stanza, (as no writer does at this day) I apprehend it to be transmitted to us, under the disadvantage of that omission, just as it was left in the author's copy—which, by the way, is no bad proof of the transcriber's fidelity.

If these principles be right, then, I think, the measures are as follow. If I am mistaken, I shall be very glad to see my errors amended.

^{1.}	חצבי ישראל	^{1.}	Hatibi Israel
	על במויתך חלל		yal bemotheca halal
	אך נפלו גבורים		ech naphelu gibborim
	אל תגידו בגת		al tagidhu begath
	אל תבשרו בחוצת אשקלון		al tebasseru behutsoth Askelon
	פן תשמחנה בנות פלשתיים		pen tismahenah benoth Pelistim
	פן תעלזנה בנות הערלים		pen taylozenah benoth hayrelim.
^{2.}	הרי בגלבע	^{2.}	hare begilboa
	אל טל ואל מטר עליכם		al tal veal matar yelechem

ושדי תרומות	ufede terumoth
כי שם נגעל מגן גבורים	ki sam nigyal magen gibborim
מגן שאול	magen Sâul
כלי משיח בשמן	chele mafiah bafamen
³ מדי חללים	³ middam hallalim
מהלב גבורים	meheleb gibborim
קשת יהונתן	kefeth jehonathan
לא נשוג אחור	lo nafug ahor
הדרכ שאול	vehereb Sâul
לא תשוב ריקם	lo tafub rekam
⁴ שאול ויהונתן	⁴ Sâul vihonathan
חנאבים	hanneahabim
והנעים בחייהם	vehanneyimim behajehem
ובמותם לא נפרדו	ubemotham lo niphradu *
מנשרים קלו	minefferim kallu
מארות גברו	mearaioth gaberu.
⁵ בנות ישראל	⁵ benoth Israel
אל שאול בכניה	el Sâul bechenah
המלבשכם שני	hammalbifchem shani
עם עדנים המעלה	yim yadanim hamayaleh
ערי זהב על לבושכן	yadi zeheb yal lebuschen
אך נפלו גבורים	ech naphelu gibborim
בתוך המלחמה	bethoc hammilhamah.
⁶ — יחונתן	⁶ Abi Jehonathan
אל במותך חלל	yal bemotheca halal
צר לי עליך	tzar li yaleha
אחי יחונתן	ali Jehonathan
נעמת לי מאד	nyáamta li meod
נפלאתה אהבתך לי	niphleatha ahabatheca li
מאהבת נשים	meahabath nashim
אך נפלו גבורים	ech naphelu gibborim
ויאברו כלי מלחמה	vajobedu chele milhamah.

* And in their death they were not divided.

Stanza

Stanza 4. *Ver. 4.* This is said in the true spirit of friendship, and in one of its finest distresses — He felicitates them upon that happy circumstance of their friendship, to be undivided in death ; and, in so doing, finely laments himself, upon that head.

Ver. 5, 6. The rapidity of the first line, and the strength, and majesty of the second, are strong instances, on which to ground that fine, poetick, precept :

The sound should be an echo to the sense.

Stanza VI. His grief, as it began with *Jonathan*, naturally ends with it. It is well known, that we lament ourselves in the loss of our friends ; and *David* was no way solicitous, to conceal this circumstance.

It may be the work of fancy : but, to me, I own, this last stanza is the strongest picture of grief, I ever perused. To my ear, every line in it is either swell'd with sighs, or broken with sobs. The judicious reader, will plainly find a break, in the first line ; very probably, so left in the original, the writer not being able to find an epithet for *Jonathan*, answering to the idea of his distress. I have ventured to supply it, in the *English* character, I think, not unnaturally ; I will not presume to say, justly.

To conclude : Few have ever perused this lamentation, with so little attention, as not to perceive it evidently animated, with a spirit truly martial, and magnanimous ! It is the lamentation of a brave man, over brave men ! It is, in one word, a lamentation equally pathetick, and heroick !

The E N D of the FIRST BOOK.



